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# THE MAKERS OF HELLAS:

A CRITICAL INQUIRY INTO THE PHILOSOPHY  
AND RELIGION OF ANCIENT GREECE.

BY  
E. E. G.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION, NOTES, AND CONCLUSION BY

FRANK BYRON JEVONS, M.A., LITT.D.,

PRINCIPAL OF BISHOP HATFIELD'S HALL, UNIVERSITY OF DURHAM.



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GENERAL

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## INTRODUCTION

THE author of *The Makers of Hellas* died before the book was in print, before even the manuscript of the work was completed, and left a request that I would prepare it for the press and publish it without revealing the writer's name. Even if the author had lived until the book appeared in print, I believe the book would have been published anonymously or under a *nom de plume*. The reason for this reticence, or this self-suppression, will not be apparent to those who merely scan the title of the work—*The Makers of Hellas*—for the title scarcely suggests the dominant thought of the book. The dominant thought and feeling of the whole work is religious. The makers of Hellas are not those who made—and unmade—her politically, nor even the artists and authors who made her what she is in literature and art. They are those through whom the spirit of religion spoke. At a time, such as the present, when the material monuments of Greece, and the isles of Greece, are claiming an ever-increasing share of the work of classical students and of the attention of the cultured world, when the sun of solar mythology has set, and folklore is absorbing the study both of ritual and belief, it may seem remote from the general trend of thought to consider seriously the religion, rather than the religious monuments or the rites or myths of ancient Greece. On the other hand, to those whose interest in myths, monuments, and rites alike is weak, it may seem excessive even to speak of the religion of a people who undeniably were pagan.

If, then, either to those who know or to those who claim no special knowledge of the thought of ancient Greece, it should yet appear, after perusal of *The Makers of Hellas*, that religion played no small part in the making of the Hellenic mind and spirit, the reader will perhaps surmise a reason why the author's name does not appear. If there be any praise—*non nobis, Domine*.

The main thought of the work then is that the Greeks were "the world's greatest Pioneers and Experimenters" (p. 3). But, whereas their services to mankind in literature and art are fully recognised, the value of their contributions to religion has generally been overlooked. It is to these evidences of religion that the author wishes to call the attention not only of students of Greek thought, not only of the growing number of those engaged in studying the history or the science of religion, but also of the general reader, and particularly of the religious reader. To the last it may seem, the author is afraid (p. 208), preposterous to talk about *religion* in connection with pagans, "or of *faith* in connection with their deities." But I am inclined to think that, justifiable as this fear once was, the occasion for it has much diminished in the last quarter of a century, and that there is a general disposition to pay increased attention to the authority of St. Paul, who declared of "every nation of men" that it was determined "that they should seek after God, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him."

In any case, the purpose of this book is to show that the Greeks did seek

after God, and to maintain that they did not wholly fail to find Him, for "He is not far from each one of us." The evidence of this is sought not in religious or "sacral" antiquities, or in mythology, or in rites and customs, but in the literature of Greece.

The limits, then, of the work are pretty plainly marked out; and there is no difficulty in pointing out the lines within which it moves. In the first place, if we distinguish, as we ought, between the philosophy and the history of religion, the book is not concerned with the philosophy of religion. The history of religious belief has nothing directly to do with the justification of belief. If a belief exists, and exists for a sufficient time, the history of that belief may be written, if the materials for the history exist and a writer is to be found. Doubtless, the history may be written "with a purpose." Thus a History of Philosophy was written by Mr. G. H. Lewes with a purpose—with the purpose of showing that philosophy, as a matter of historic fact, was futile. Histories of religion—and more frequently histories of some particular religion—have been written with a view to show the validity of religion or the truth of some particular religion. But, in either case, such histories have not been purely "objective." Their purpose has been not merely to record facts, but to interpret them, and to interpret them in one, or other, particular way. They have been, consciously or unconsciously—generally unconsciously—philosophies, as well as histories, of religion. And unconscious philosophy is specially liable to go wrong and to walk into some pitfalls which the avowed philosopher has learnt to avoid. Theoretically, the historian who is to be purely "objective" should have—we will not say no philosophy, for such ignorance may lead him into those very pitfalls to which we have just alluded, but should have—an absolute impartiality for facts, and should surrender himself absolutely to facts. As a matter of fact, whatever may be the case with social or political history, this is not yet the case with religious history. Every historian of religion starts from a definite point in philosophy, with a decided attitude towards the philosophy of religion, and that attitude may be—indeed generally is—none the less definite and decided because the writer himself is unaware of it. So far as the philosophic prepossessions of the writer tend to shut out facts from his view, or to distort his view of facts, the remedy lies, for the reader, in the hope that other writers, because they start from a different philosophic point and follow a different prepossession, may strike upon facts hitherto ignored or may reach a less distorted view. In fine, it must be with religious history as it has been with political or social history: the personal, religious equation may not be immediately ascertainable, and it may not at the time and for the moment be possible to make the right allowance for it; but in course of time and with the advance of knowledge, we may take it for granted that, as long as the desire for truth is active, errors will slowly cancel themselves out, and there will be a gradually and increasing recognition of certain facts as "objective," and as undoubtedly true, whatever philosophic standpoint we take up.

Indeed to a large extent, and especially in the case of a historic people, such as the Hellenes, we have already at our disposal a large number of facts which will at once be recognised, by those competent to judge, as "objective" and as historically true. It is, that is to say, historically and objectively fact that the Hellenes held certain religious beliefs. It is with this kind of objective fact that history of religion has exclusively to do. To establish such objective fact may in some cases require the utmost—and even more than the utmost—that the historian can do. Thus it may be difficult or impossible to trace back, beyond a certain point, the belief in a future life, or in the immortality of the



soul, or in punishments and rewards after death. But thus to trace belief backwards and forwards is the work of the historian: and that, and that only, is his work. To inquire what is the value of the belief, when it has been traced, or before it has been traced; to ask what evidence there is—not that the belief was entertained or how it came to be entertained, but—that it is a true or justifiable belief; those are questions, which, if asked, cannot be answered by history, for all that history can testify is that the beliefs have been held, not that they are true. Whether the beliefs have or have not value, whether they are or are not true, are questions which may be answered by the individual seeker after truth either on his own responsibility and at his own risk, or may be referred for their solution to philosophy. When answered by the individual, however, the principles on which he gives his answer and undertakes his responsibility are evidently capable of generalisation and should be as valid for other people as for himself. In other words, they form potentially a philosophy, a theory of the universe which all other people would hold, if only they saw the facts in the same way—assuming, of course, that it is, as it appears to the holder of the view to be, the right way. If, however, the individual thinker, instead of answering the questions on his own responsibility, proceeds to philosophy for their solution, he will find at the end that he must choose his own philosophy on his own responsibility and at his own risk. But by following this course he will gain great advantages: he will at anyrate, before making his choice, have duly considered the solutions proposed by the greatest philosophic minds; he will have discovered that some errors have been definitely recognised and discarded; and he will, by avoiding those errors, be guided to some extent in the right direction. He will be less in danger of inventing an unconscious philosophy which no one else can share with him; and more likely to realise truths which a majority of those qualified to judge consider to be true.

The disrepute into which philosophy has fallen, in England at anyrate, of late years, is due to the extraordinary development of the theory of Evolution, which has done so much for knowledge that was unexpected that no bounds are recognised to what may be expected from it. It is undoubtedly considered to do away with the necessity of philosophy, either because it is itself the sole, sufficient philosophy, or because, confining itself to facts, it explains them, and so dispenses with the need of any further philosophic explanation. From this point of view all that is supposed to be necessary for the proper understanding of any matter is facts, positive facts, and their relation to one another. For the proper understanding of the present, as it is, all that is required, on this supposition, is to know the actual facts which led up to it and caused it. The ideal—unattainable, indeed, in the historic sciences, but none the less to be aimed at—would be, from this point of view, to attain a series of equations, which should resemble chemical equations, and which should be such that on one side of the historic equation there should be stated all the causes at work at a given moment, while on the other side the outcome of the causes should be stated with such precision that every single atom which was postulated on the one side should appear—though in different combinations—on the other side. When everything postulated on the one side was accounted for on the other side, when every factor in the process of evolution which was at work as a cause at any given moment was seen to appear, though in a different form, in the sum total of effects, then the effect would be scientifically and totally accounted for. The history of the thing would then be complete. And though such precision in the quantitative causes and effects of human thought and action is impossible, the Historic Method seeks to approximate as closely

to this ideal as the nature of its subject-matter permits, and to realise the working of cause and effect roughly and in outline.

For the successful application of the Historic Method there is one condition which is plainly indispensable: it is that the historian must not tamper with the facts. He must not have a theory to prove or disprove—for that might lead him astray—and every fact, as fact, must be as valuable in his eyes as any other fact. Truth, in a word, is the only value which he can allow to facts. If he has prepossessions in favour of this cause or that, in favour of this country or that, this character or that, he must resolutely suppress them and rigorously exclude them from his work. From the beginning he must know no partiality; and at the end he must show no satisfaction at the triumph of this movement or the downfall of that. His business is to ascertain facts, not to estimate their value. To ascertain the facts of Mary's reign is the work of a historian. The value of her work will be differently estimated by the Protestant and the Roman. But thus to assign the religious worth or moral value of the facts that took place is no part of the historian's work. It is, indeed, practically impossible to rest content with the objective results of the Historic Method: if the historian himself refuses to pass any judgment upon the facts, the reader will form a judgment of his own; and in doing so he will, consciously or unconsciously, be doing the philosopher's work. In other words, rigorously as the historian may exclude philosophy and the valuation of facts in order to ascertain simply what events took place, what were their causes and what their effects, no one is content to remain satisfied with the facts, every one passes his own judgment upon them and draws his own philosophic conclusions. The Historic Method is simply a means to an end; its object is to ascertain facts, but the facts are to be ascertained in order that a judgment may be passed upon them. And such judgment is part of philosophy.

What is thus true of a particular reign, is true of the whole story of Evolution. Interesting as the story itself may be, more interesting are the questions, what are we to think of it? what conclusions are we to draw from it? how is it to affect our actions, our beliefs, our hopes? These questions may be answered, indeed, as they have been answered, very simply, by the dictum that Evolution is Progress. This answer may be right or it may be wrong. Evidently it implies that we know, roughly but sufficiently well, what evolution is, and what progress is; and that, on coming to look at both, we discover that they coincide. It implies that we have a standard of the good; that we can test the process of evolution by it; and that, when we so test it, we find the movement of evolution is always in the direction of the good. Unless we have the standard, we cannot measure the movement or ascertain its direction. Two things are necessary: that we should have knowledge of the movement and that we should have the standard whereby to measure it. We cannot measure a thing, if we have nothing to measure it by; or ascertain the direction of a movement, if we have no fixed point from or by which to ascertain it. If we know what good is, or what progress is, we can determine whether the movement of evolution is towards it or away from it; if not, not. But to ascertain, in the first place, what good is or wherein progress consists, is a philosophical inquiry.

Thus we come back to our original position, that, when we have ascertained what, as a matter of objective fact, has happened—what the evolution or the history of a thing has been—there still remains the inevitable task of determining whether the thing was right or wrong, a thing to be acquiesced in or to be remedied, to be avoided in future, or to be promoted. And thus to determine the value of what has been or is is part of the work of philosophy.



There can be little doubt that, the moment we come to test in this way the value of things that have happened and of movements that have taken place in the past, we recognise that some were good and some bad; that deterioration as well as improvement takes place; in fine, that, though progress is always a process of evolution, evolution is neither necessarily improvement nor always progress. The moment we have a standard whereby to measure, a goal to which movement ought to be directed, we can determine whether and to what extent progress is being made, and whether a given movement is progress or deterioration.

Nor can it be doubted that for the history of religion we are bound to assume some such standard, implicitly or explicitly. To begin with, it is impossible to pretend to undertake the history of religion if we have not the least idea of what we mean by religion and have no means of distinguishing, roughly at least, religious facts from non-religious facts. We must at the outset make up our minds that there are many things done by man and many thoughts elaborated by him which it is not necessary for the historian of religion to take notice of. When we set aside such facts as not bearing directly upon religion, we thereby, however roughly or even erroneously, testify to the fact that we have some conception, even if we give no definition, of religion. But some such conception, if not definition, must be present to our minds, or else we could not separate out those facts which seem to us to belong to the history of religion, and discard those which are irrelevant to our purpose. The history of religion cannot begin unless and until we have such a conception or definition; and the work of framing such a definition belongs to the philosophy of religion.

With such a definition, the historian of religion is in a position not only to select his facts, that is, to discriminate between those facts in the general history of his period which do and those which do not belong to the history of religion; but he is also able to distinguish, by reference to his definition of religion, movements of progress from movements of deterioration; and to determine whether the whole period has been one of religious progress or of religious decay. But it is only by reference to his definition of religion that he can do this; and it is only on the assumption of the correctness of his definition that what he regards as progress can be admitted to be progress. If we wish to contest or he wishes to maintain the correctness of his definition, the discussion ceases to be one of historic facts and becomes one of philosophy. But until his definition is disputed, he is concerned with the purely historic function of determining objectively what movements actually took place, and what their direction was.

The philosophic starting-point then of *The Makers of Hellas* is given on page 212: there are "two facts which stare us in the face, viz. (1) that in all ages men have been believers in the Unseen; and (2) that the Unseen has exercised over their lives an influence far transcending that of the seen, the visible." With the question whether this belief is justifiable or reasonable, the author of *The Makers of Hellas* has nothing to do. That is a philosophic question, and this is a historical work. Whatever the philosophic answer to the philosophic question may be, the historic fact that in all ages men have been subject to these beliefs remains untouched and unassailable. That any scientific or historic account of religion must start by recognising this fact and must be built upon this fact as its foundation is recognised and insisted upon by Professor William James in *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, who says (p. 465): "The religious phenomenon, studied as an inner fact, and apart from ecclesiastical or theological complications, has shown

itself to consist everywhere, and at all its stages, in the consciousness which individuals have of an intercourse between themselves and higher powers with which they feel themselves to be related. This intercourse is realised at the time as being both active and mutual." He quotes from M. Auguste Sabatier (*Esquisse d'une Philosophie de la Religion*, pp. 24-26) the words: "Religion is an intercourse, a conscious and voluntary relation, entered into by a soul in distress with the mysterious power upon which it feels itself to depend, and upon which its fate is contingent. Prayer is religion in act; that is prayer is real religion. . . . This act is prayer, by which term I understand no vain exercise of words, no mere repetition of certain sacred formulæ, but the very movement itself of the soul, putting itself in a personal relation of contact with the mysterious power of which it feels the presence—it may be even before it has a name by which to call it."

*The Makers of Hellas*, then, starts from a strictly scientific starting-point. To some readers, and particularly to those whom our author specially addresses, that is to those whose faith in the Christian religion happily requires none of the doubtful props of philosophy and fears nothing from the circumscriptions by which science surrounds itself, it may seem that the limitation thus self-imposed is alike unnecessary and fraught with danger. It may seem to be an unduly narrow limitation of the scope of "primal revelation." The answer to this objection is to be found in the theory of evolution, rightly understood. The objection itself seems to be based upon an implicit confusion of "primal revelation" with final revelation. To assume that primitive man started with a full and complex revelation of God in all His attributes—His wisdom, justice, holiness—is indeed to surround ourselves with difficulties which are perfectly insuperable. The history of the ages, the common experience of mankind, the testimony of nature, will set themselves in array against us, and demand our warrant for the assumption (pp. 212, 213). The assumption is indeed set aside by the words of St. Paul, that the nations were "to seek the Lord if haply they might *feel after* Him and find Him." The finding follows after the search; it does not precede it. The "feeling after" the Lord implies that there is a limitation of knowledge in the "primal revelation." That the knowledge, thus limited in the case of primitive man, should develop and increase, is in accord with all that we see around us: "everywhere we see the Perfect slowly evolving out of the less perfect or the imperfect: the dawn preceding the day; the acorn sending forth the shoot, the shoot growing into the sapling, the sapling into the oak." Above all, and on the highest authority, so it is in the spiritual life: "the same law is laid down by the MASTER as the law of His kingdom, whether in a single soul or in that aggregate of souls, which we call a church or a nation: 'First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear'" (p. 213).

Man was indeed made in the image (*eikon*) and after the likeness (*homoiosis*) of God (Gen. i. 26); but Gregory of Nyssa and the early Fathers taught that whereas the "image" of God was something *in* which men were created, the "likeness" of God "was something *toward* which man was created, that he might strive after and attain it" (Trench, *Synonyms*, p. 52). It is precisely with this process, this "striving after" the *homoiosis*, this "feeling after" the Lord, that the history of religion has to do. And it is precisely this process that constitutes the evolution of religion. Or perhaps we should rather say that the evolution of religion comprises all the attempts that have been made by man, whether successful or unsuccessful; but that evolution is not necessarily progress. The term Progress can only be applied to those attempts which have achieved some measure of success, not to those phases of evolution



which may have resulted in the abandonment of the search, or which may have themselves been abandoned as leading to nothing or worse than nothing.

If, then, the evolution of religion is the history of the many attempts that man has made to search after the Lord, peradventure he may find Him, it is *ex hypothesi* inconsistent and impossible to assume that the primal was a full revelation: "to imagine the primal revelation to have consisted in the full knowledge of God as HE IS, is to postulate an impossibility, to reverse the course of Nature and of Providence, to set ourselves against the order of the universe—the Divine Law of Progress" (p. 213). The intercourse, active and mutual, between the individual and the Unseen, which, from a strictly scientific point of view, we are warranted in taking as the starting-point alike for the psychology and the history of religion, may cheerfully be accepted as the point of departure by those whose first, vital and permanent interest is in religion itself rather than in the history of religion or its psychology. But it is only as a point of departure that it will or should be so accepted. More important, all-absorbing is the attempt to trace the course which, starting from that point, man has struck out. Or, rather we should say, to follow the many tracks, leading in many directions, which men have struck out, groping after the truth. To trace these courses and lay them out upon the map of life is indeed the work of the history of religion; and it is the business of its historian to record them all, for even those which ultimately proved unsuccessful, must for a time and in some way not have been entire failures: "He is not far from each one of us."

But readers whose interest is in religion, and not in its history or its psychology, will demand *Cui bono?* to whom is it of any use to study acknowledged failures? Students of physical science are required to understand and to accept the acknowledged truths of science: only by so doing can they expect to proceed to the conquest of fresh truths. Physical science has indeed had its history, has accepted in the past as fact what subsequent investigation has shown not to be fact, has held hypotheses which increasing knowledge has demonstrated to be false hypotheses. But all these have been shovelled aside; the records of them can be discovered by those who are interested in such things. But for practical purposes and by practical men they are ignored. Nothing is to be gained by dwelling amid them: they cumber the ground. Is the case otherwise with religion and its history?

In one striking point it is otherwise. There are many religions. There are many forms of Christianity. Science is one.

If there were as many theories of gravitation as there are sects of Christianity, acquaintance with their history would be a matter of first-rate scientific importance. It would be an indispensable preliminary to weeding out the wrong theories or the wrong elements in any one of them. Church History is a matter of first-rate theological importance. It is a record of the steps by which the creed of the individual believer has been reached, of the arguments by which fallacies or heresies have been set aside, and by which the truth has been established. But what is thus true of Church History is also true of the History of Religion: it aims at giving the whole story, the complete record, of all the steps from the very beginning.

If there were the same unanimity in religious belief as there is in scientific belief, the history of error in religion might, perhaps, be as remote from practical interest as the history of exploded doctrines in science. But there is not. And because there is not, the individual has a personal responsibility for the religious belief which he holds, such as he has not for his scientific belief. Or we may put it in another way. In any large business concern, the share-

holders feel no interest in the trial balance-sheets which have to be got out and corrected before the final balance-sheet, certified by the auditors, can be placed before them. If they trust the accountant and auditors, they accept the balance-sheet: they have no interest in seeing the trial balances, or hearing the process by which errors were detected, or studying the causes which lead to mistakes. They are concerned simply and solely with the final form of the accounts, certified to be correct. The result is everything; the process, or rather a history of the process, by which this error or that was tracked from book to book and its genesis made plain, would be worse than useless: it would involve a waste of time, and delay them from proceeding promptly to fresh commercial enterprises, which must be undertaken at once or not at all.

Now, in science we are all shareholders; and, as long as we receive our dividends, we feel no interest in the clerks, the book-keepers, the accountants, and the auditors, or in the history of the process by which, after making mistakes and correcting them, they contrive to get out the balance. But in life we are not merely shareholders: we have our personal, private accounts. In them, indeed, others are shareholders; and on us falls the responsibility of keeping them correctly. We have to render an account; and the process by which accounts can be kept properly becomes a matter of the first importance. In this instance we have a very direct interest in the accountant's business, in the means and processes by which errors are detected and corrected, in the causes which lead to errors; and the history of such errors is a matter in which we have a vital concern. The process by which we, or others acting for us, have arrived at our conclusions, whether in religion or morals, is of the utmost importance; and it is to the history of that process that we must return again and again, if we are to find out whether and where a mistake has arisen. And our accounts are never in this life finally made up. We never reach the stage of the final balance-sheet, from which we can look back and see all our errors finally corrected. There is always the possibility, the probability, the certainty of many errors not yet corrected, not yet detected. We may from time to time strike a provisional balance-sheet, and find, perhaps, that we are somewhat nearer to the desired end, that we have made some progress, but we also discover that there is always still something wrong somewhere, much to correct, progress to be made.

What is thus true of the individual and of the account that he has to render is also true of the race and of the principles of morality. Men's notions of right and wrong have varied infinitely in the course of their evolution and development. Men have always tried more or less to keep their accounts straight, and have had no doubt that they could be kept straight. It is because they have, rightly, cherished this belief, and have repeatedly made this attempt, that they have, with wider and longer experience, discovered and to some extent corrected their first mistakes. An obvious instance of this process is afforded by the history of the sacred duty of revenge. A blow for a blow, an eye for an eye, a life for a life are maxims of conduct which certainly lead to the gratification of the desire for vengeance, and may, in some cases, satisfy justice. An eye for an eye is a maxim which can be acted on by the individual, who has suffered injustice and desires revenge, without appealing to the community. The case is different with the principle of a life for a life: the person murdered cannot take his revenge—it must be taken by the survivors. Doubtless they are actuated partly or mainly by the desire for vengeance, but their motives are not entirely personal: it is not purely revenge which they wish to take, but to some extent, however small, it is justice that they desire to carry



out. When the avenging party includes persons who are but remotely akin to the dead man, the desire for personal revenge must in their case be less potent and active than the desire for justice. But even in their case the motive assigned and accepted for their action is vengeance rather than justice; and, so long as this is so, the blood-feud and the vendetta flourish. Revenge, not justice, alone is understood and accepted; and revenge never finally settles the account, or rather it always opens a fresh one. Thus the blood-feud may be transmitted from one generation to another, and is so transmitted, until there arises a power superior to that of the families at feud. This power is inherent in the state to which the families belong or may come to belong; and it becomes effective when the necessity for its intervention is great enough to call it into action. Its action is primarily directed to the termination of the feud, and it may terminate it either by settling the compensation to be made or by itself inflicting the punishment of exile or death on the murderer. Thus a limit is imposed on the spirit of revenge; and the court, however constituted, is not actuated by any desire for personal vengeance, but by the duty of seeing that revenge does not proceed beyond the bounds of justice. A further step in this direction is taken when the relatives of the murdered man are no longer expected or allowed to prosecute, and the state undertakes, not merely to judge a defendant brought before it, but by its police and its public prosecutor to detect the criminal and to bring him before the judge. The whole process then is taken out of the sphere of private personal revenge, and is conducted from beginning to end by state officials whose only interest is the discharge of justice and who are absolutely untouched by any desire for personal vengeance. The object aimed at by the whole proceeding is no longer the gratification of the injured party's vengeful feelings—a just punishment frequently fails to satisfy them completely—but the impartial distribution of even-handed justice.

There will be no doubt that justice is more effectually done in the criminal court of a modern civilised country than by the uncivilised methods of the blood-feud or vendetta. There can, however, be no doubt that in the earlier stages of the development of justice the desire for revenge and the excesses of the vendetta are approved, as right, by the community: they are accepted as the proper method of squaring accounts. But, as a matter of fact, the growth of experience tends to show that they do not balance the account, as they are originally intended to do, but produce further deviations; and when these further deviations are recognised to be serious, and to be the inevitable consequence of this method of keeping accounts, approval of them becomes impossible—originally pronounced right they are now condemned as morally wrong. In other words, we are convinced that there has been not only evolution, but also progress in the development of the idea of justice. But evolution is not in all cases progress. Modern courts of justice and the excesses of the vendetta are both evolutions from the same rough notion of justice; but in the former case there has been progress, the movement has been in the direction of ideal justice; in the latter case the movement has been farther and farther away from justice, and more and more a degradation.

Returning once more to the question why should we bestow upon the history of morals or religion an attention which the student of science is not expected to pay to the history of exploded scientific notions, we can see at least one obvious reason: the average student of science is in no such immediate danger of rediscovering, for instance, "the great Kepler's view of the celestial harmonies produced by the various and varying velocities of the several

planets" (H. Sidgwick, *Philosophy: Its Scope and Relations*, p. 165), that it is necessary to spend much time in convincing him of its futility. But the average moral agent is exposed, when wronged, to the desire for vengeance; and much, or most, of such moral progress as we individually make, we make at our own cost and loss, by doing wrong and bitterly repenting it.

Embryology shows that in the earliest stages of his growth the individual human being passes summarily through the process of evolution by which the race has attained its present human form. It is a commonplace not merely of psychology but of ordinary observation that the child, with less rapidity, may pass through the stages by which man has reached his present civilisation. He may, of course, suffer from arrested development and ultimate degradation: the "little savage" may pass into "a savage brute," and so on to the gallows. The individual, at every stage of his youthful development, finds a variety of paths before him, of which he may choose any one, and all of which have been tried by his predecessors before him. The record of the success or want of success which has attended their attempts is contained in the moral code of his time. On that map of life the experience of his predecessors has recorded the issue of their experiments, and has marked the various paths "right" or "wrong." The blind desires which drove some or most of his predecessors down the wrong path operate on him also. Hence the necessity of blocking the way as effectually as possible. Hence, too, the difference between the moral agent and the student of science. The errors which have been made in the history of science have been committed by individuals, those in the history of morals by the race. The temptations by which the moral agent is led astray recur in the history of every man, whereas presumably the majority of those who study astronomy are filled rather with astonishment that the great Kepler should have formulated his views on the celestial harmonies than with any wish to re-formulate them for themselves. If, for the practical purposes of understanding or carrying forward a science, a knowledge of the past history of its exploded hypotheses is unnecessary, whereas for the practical work of morality a careful record of the consequences of following the wrong paths is of vital importance, the plain reason is that in the one case the individual is perpetually presented with the choice of paths, and in the other he is rarely exposed to the temptation. In the one case the wrong path has been trodden broad by the number of those who have plunged down it; in the other case the footprints of the solitary genius who adventured on it have so disappeared that the wayfaring student is unconscious of them. The tendency to go wrong has been transmitted and inherited in the one case; and the temptation is there. There is no inherited tendency in the other case, and no recurring temptation. If the temptation to assuage the thirst for revenge occurred no oftener than the temptation to formulate Keplerian theories of the celestial harmonies, there would be no need of any law to check it; nor would the practical value of tracing the consequences of leaving the temptation unchecked be any greater in the one case than in the other. Nor is there in reality any greater doubt about the validity of our moral precepts than there is about the laws of motion or of gravitation: the difference lies in the fact that whereas particles of matter cannot choose but gravitate, individual men can and do choose not to obey the laws of morality.

It is because of this power of choice that it is a matter of importance to study historically the consequences of the action chosen. We thus may profit by the experience of others rather than learn at our own cost. If the vendetta has been abandoned, it is because the community after trial of it has eventually chosen to put it down: the experiment of unlicensed revenge has been tried



and has been pronounced a failure. Its consequences have been such that it has been pronounced to be intolerable by the community. Those consequences have been twofold: the perpetual danger to individual members of the community and the growing sense that justice is not achieved. Both of these evil consequences are averted when it is at length, as a matter of experience and by the process of trial and error, discovered that justice is a matter in which not only the individual but the community is concerned, and that justice can only be efficiently done when it is disentangled from the vengeful motives of the individual and administered by the community.

The process by which public justice is thus evolved out of the impulses and actions of the individual throws some light on the way in which religion, from being an individual instinct, impulse or aspiration, becomes a public institution, and, as such, rises as far above its first expression as modern justice stands above the blood-feud. The religious phenomenon, as Professor James says in the passage already quoted, when reduced to its simplest terms, consists everywhere "in the consciousness which individuals have of an intercourse between themselves and higher powers with which they feel themselves to be related." That they may and do frequently misapprehend the nature and the meaning of this intercourse is apparent to any student of the subject, whether he approaches it from the side of the history of religion or from the side of psychology, as set forth in Professor James' *Varieties of Religious Experience*. But they also frequently misapprehend the nature and meaning of justice: in the beginning, as we have seen, it is overlaid and distorted by the vengeful feelings; and at the present day, if those feelings less frequently succeed in perverting the course of justice, it is because the administration of justice has been removed from the influence of personal caprice and is dealt out by the community. The final determination of justice, experience has shown, cannot be entrusted to the individual: it is too liable to perversion. And as the political community has sought to eliminate errors from the doing of justice by refusing to allow the individual to be the judge of his own cause, so the religious community has found itself compelled to determine the limits within which the experiences of the individual can be interpreted to be religious. There is no hesitation on the part of civilised man to believe that justice is more surely done by a modern court of law in criminal cases than it was or could be done in the time of the blood-feud or in countries where the vendetta prevails: the efforts of advancing civilisation have been directed, not unsuccessfully, towards disengaging the requirements of justice from the excesses into which the spirit of revenge when unrestrained has regularly run. The higher conception of justice which has thus been reached has undoubtedly reacted on the individual in such a way that in many or most cases he would, even if unrestrained by external forces, be less liable to be carried away by the desire for vengeance, or would sooner be recalled from excessive steps.

But if the political community has been thus successful in raising and enforcing the conception of justice, the religious community has done perhaps not less in raising the conception and enforcing the practice of religion. It is true that in different political communities, or in different periods of any one political community, the actual administration of justice may vary much from the ideal and fall short of it in various degrees. It is true that the very constitution of the political community may place the administration of justice in the hands of a favoured class, and that generations and centuries may be spent in the struggle to escape from the abuses thereby entailed. There is therefore no reason to be surprised, and no reason to doubt the reality of either justice or religion, if different religious communities, or different stages in the

history of any one religious community, have fallen short of the religious ideal in various degrees.

In the case of the political community and in the matter of justice, the authority of the community is undoubted; and the consequences which ensue, when the community does not as yet exercise its authority, or falls to pieces and is unable to exercise it, are convincing proofs of its necessity. It is not merely that the community, when healthily organised, has might, such as no individual member of it can exercise by himself, and which is necessary if even-handed justice is to be dealt to rich and poor, to the mighty and the weak alike, but that it has right, and that the tendency to justice, which does exist in the individual but is always liable to perversion by the temptations to which the individual is exposed, is set free when it becomes an affair of the community and attains a development which otherwise it could not reach. The flower of justice can only bloom in a garden from which have been cast out the weeds that otherwise would over-run it.

That it is as impossible for the religious as for the political community to abstain from the exercise of its power, and yet to perform the functions for which it exists, may be seen by any one who chooses to read Professor James' *Varieties of Religious Experience*, and can draw the right conclusions from it. In that work are given numerous examples, not merely of the varieties of religious experience, but of the vagaries of individual souls; and the reader of the documents quoted, if they were the only facts he had to go by, would be as puzzled to make out what religion is, and as likely to doubt its objective existence and validity, as he would be to comprehend the nature and reality of justice, if the only facts he had to guide him were the records of a series of vendettas. The truth is that in both cases we have presented to us the behaviour of the individual when unchecked and uncorrected by the authority of the community; and in both we see the extravagances which ensue when that authority is non-existent or non-effective. In both cases we are warranted, and indeed compelled, to believe that there resides in the community not only greater power to enforce its beliefs than there does in any individual, but a higher conception and a purer ideal. In both cases the garden must be weeded, if the flowers are to grow; and in both cases there must be the power to decide what are weeds and what are flowers. And in neither case is the individual, by his own unaided powers, competent to decide in all cases what should flourish. In the *Varieties of Religious Experience* we have a copious demonstration of what weeds may grow up in plots removed from the community's control. The extravagances into which the individual soul is liable to run, in the field of religion, when uncontrolled, are parallel to the errors which are committed in the matter of justice when every man does what is right in his own eyes.

It is the community which checks excesses in both cases; and, for that purpose, ecclesiastical organisation is as necessary as political organisation. But as political systems may perform their functions with very different degrees of success, and may even break down altogether because they fail to perform them in a way satisfactory to their members, so may religious systems. When either does so break down, it is because a majority of the individual members find that their own ideals of justice or of religion are not satisfied by the constitution or the action of the community. If a community of either kind, political or ecclesiastical, is to continue to exist, there must be in its members a spontaneous recognition of the authority under which they find themselves. The individual must be able to look into his own heart and there find confirmation of the legitimacy of the authority to which he is subjected or



submits himself. He must indeed be able to find that the authority imposed upon, or accepted by him, approves itself as a better guide to religion or morality than his own unaided and unguided impulse. It should lead him to find in his own heart what, without its guidance, he might fail to find. The conviction that by submitting to its guidance he will ultimately, though he may not at first, find from his own personal inner experience an abiding satisfaction to which he would not otherwise attain, is a matter of faith, for which he has evidence of precisely the same kind as he has for his faith in the uniformity of nature and the science that is built upon that faith. But though his own personal experience may confirm the faith which he shares with others, and though it is his own experience of what his faith has done for him—whether it be faith in science or in religion—that is the guarantee of his faith; this does not set the individual above the community or make him the final arbiter to the exclusion of the community, political or religious, to which he belongs. His own experience of what has been is satisfactory evidence to himself of the good that he has attained by accepting and acting on principles, whether of science or religion, which he did not invent or discover for himself, but which were the heirlooms of the society of which he is a member. His past experience warrants him in continuing to act on those principles in the faith that it will be better for him to act on them than to reject them. It does not warrant him in setting up the individual as a judge superior to the community. Unfortunately it does not always and invariably prevent him from so setting up himself. Those who take vengeance into their own hands, for example, do set up themselves as judges superior to the judges of the land; and those who break away from the religious community to which they belong and surrender themselves to their own subjective impulses, set themselves up as individually capable of better judgment than the community is. In the matter of science similar variations occur: there are always to be found some few persons, incapable of appreciating the weight and value of scientific evidence, who maintain that the earth is flat, and who are as convinced of the truth of their assertion as the vengeful person is of the justice of his action.

In all these cases the individual sets himself up as superior to the community to which he belongs, and to the principles by which it is regulated. The community, on the other hand, punishes him, excommunicates him, or severely leaves him alone, as the case may be. But in no case does it allow validity to action or belief subversive of its own principles. Progress, indeed, may and does require the extension of the buildings already erected, their alteration and in many cases their partial reconstruction. But in no case does it demand or permit of the total destruction of the whole edifice and the razing of its very foundations. Nor have any reforms, which have been truly reforms, required it. They have always proceeded on the faith that the principles on which the community—political, scientific, or religious—is based, call for reform in some of the superstructures erected on those principles. But it is always on the strength of those principles that the reformer has acted, and to the faith of the community in those principles that he has appealed.

The *positive* religions of the world, *i.e.* those which “trace their origin to the teaching of great religious innovators,” such as Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, were all reforms of pre-existing religious systems. “A new scheme of faith can find a hearing only by appealing to religious instincts and susceptibilities that already exist in its audience, and it cannot reach these without taking account of the traditional forms in which all religious feeling is embodied” (Robertson Smith, *The Religion of the Semites*, p. 2). Until a great religious innovator has sprung up, and by his teaching has founded a

positive religion, what prevails is a *traditional* religion, "a body of religious usage and belief which cannot be traced to the influence of individual minds, and was not propagated on individual authority, but formed part of that inheritance from the past into which successive generations of the race grew up as it were instinctively" (*ibid.*).

It is with a traditional religion that the author of *The Makers of Hellas* has to do. The obvious and outstanding features of such a religion are its myths and its ritual. So impressive are they at first sight that for a time there was a tendency to regard mythology as constituting the whole and sole religion of the ancient Greeks, and comparative mythology as containing the key to the religion of the Indo-Europeans generally. That religious feeling in any proper sense of the word might be entirely wanting from these myths was a fact which did not at first fix attention. That many of the myths were immoral in the eyes not only of ourselves but of the more reflective Greeks, was a difficulty which was set aside either by the assumption that the myths did not mean what they said, but were originally descriptive of solar or other natural phenomena, and as such were perfectly innocent of the abominations which ensued when by a disease of language the phenomena were personalised; or by the alternative argument of Mr. A. Lang, which has now gained practically universal acceptance, that those myths mean what they say, and are survivals from the time when the ancestors of the civilised Greeks were still in a state of barbarism or even of savagery. But if the second alternative is accepted, there still remains the original difficulty of discovering any religion or religious feeling in those and in other myths. The "ætiological" theory of myths does not aid in the discovery. According to that theory man has always required, more or less instantly, an explanation of things that arrest his attention; and has supplied that explanation by framing hypotheses to account for them. The explanations thus advanced to account for the customs observed by men in their dealings with their gods, or for the course of nature as it affected man, naturally and indeed inevitably took the form of assigning, as a reason for what happened or was done, that some personal being or agent had once behaved in a certain way, and that way of behaving had been faithfully followed ever since. Obviously here, allowing that the ætiological theory may account for many myths, we do not necessarily strike upon anything religious by following it out. It might be that, in seeking for an explanation of the fact that required accounting for, the primitive framer of crude hypotheses would hit upon something that would be now recognised as religious. It is certain that in the vast majority of cases he did not.

Indeed not only is it the case that myths are not religious, from our point of view: belief in them was not exacted from members of the community in which they were current, as compliance with the ritual of the State was enforced. "Belief in a certain series of myths was neither obligatory as a part of true religion, nor was it supposed that, by believing, a man acquired religious merit and conciliated the favour of the gods" (Robertson Smith, *The Religion of the Semites*, p. 17). On the other hand, compliance with ritual was obligatory, and, by such compliance, men were held to acquire religious merit and to conciliate the favour of the gods. By compliance with ritual is meant not only the performance of sacrifice but the making of offerings in the manner and after the custom observed and prescribed at any given sanctuary. The nature of the offerings, the particular kind of animal to be sacrificed, its precise colour, the exact ritual to be followed, were all of course prescribed in each sanctuary; and the due fulfilment of every point was ensured by the priests in charge of the shrine and responsible for the proper performance of the rites.



If offerings were to be made, they had to be made in accordance with the rites and customs of the place and the occasion. But, in point of fact, the duty of public worship was not a hypothetical but a categorical imperative; and it was enforced ordinarily by public opinion, and, if necessary, by the action of the State and the criminal courts. There were indeed many offerings, *e.g.* those made for deliverance from disease or danger of death, the neglect of which would not entail an indictment for "impiety" or involve penalties inflicted by the State. But custom and public opinion were quite strong enough to ensure the due performance of these offerings.

The question then remains whether compliance with ritual, which was required by public opinion and could be enforced, if necessary, by law, is to be regarded as constituting the whole of the religion of the Greeks. If, indeed, we accept the view of Professor James, already quoted, that "the religious phenomenon . . . has shown itself to consist everywhere, and at all its stages, in the consciousness which individuals have of an intercourse between themselves and higher powers with which they feel themselves to be related," we may at first be tempted to wonder whether we are justified in seeing any religion whatever in the ritual of the Greeks, and whether ritual of any kind is or can be part of "the religious phenomenon." The words of M. Sabatier, quoted by Professor James, tend to confirm the view that ritual is not part of the religious phenomenon: "Prayer is real religion . . . prayer . . . by which I understand no vain exercise of words, no mere repetition of certain sacred formulæ, but the very movement itself of the soul, putting itself in a personal relation of contact with the mysterious power of which it feels the presence." Religion is thus definitely identified with "the very movement itself of the soul"; it is a "consciousness which individuals have"; it is therefore apparently distinguished, and indeed dissociated, from any outward act whatever, and consequently from the performance of all ritual acts.

Here then we have contrasted, apparently two extreme views. The Greek community would not tolerate the abstention from the outward, ritual acts, whatever might be the consciousness which the abstaining citizen had, or whatever "the very movement itself" of his soul. The modern thinkers will not admit any outward act, any repetition of sacred formulæ, any act of ritual or any external act at all, to be part of "the religious phenomenon," or of "real religion."

But it would be a misapprehension of the ancient position to infer that, because compliance with ritual was required and enforced, no movement of the worshipper's soul itself was contemplated or expected, or that the individual worshipper had no consciousness of intercourse between himself and the higher powers whom he approached with his offerings. The performance of the ritual could be enforced by law and public opinion, because it is possible to see whether outward acts are or are not gone through in the way prescribed by law or custom. The intercourse which is purely internal, the movement of the soul itself, evades the eye and eludes the grasp of the law. The State did all that it could do, if it insisted on the due performance of the outward act. But we are not warranted in inferring from this that nothing more than the outward act took place, or that nothing more was expected by the community from the worshipper. The outward acts were performed regularly and multitudinously; their performance must have been accompanied and dictated by consciousness and motives of some kind. They certainly were not accompanied, as an ordinary thing, with a conviction that the whole business was a meaningless mummerly; nor was the motive which dictated them simply the desire to avoid a prosecution for impiety. If such had been the unanimous conviction

of the community, public opinion would have expressed it plainly. But public opinion was very strongly the other way. Accordingly, the motive cannot have been to avoid prosecution for impiety. The community, as a whole, was not impious or unbelieving: the Athenians were *δεισιδαίμονεστεροι*.

If we seek to learn what was the nature of the motives at work upon them and inducing them to perform ritual acts, to make offerings and to offer sacrifice, in the due and customary way, we may perhaps turn to the *Euthyphro* of Plato. If we do, we shall learn that the popular opinion of the nature of sacrifice, when examined by a philosopher, might be reduced to this: that it consisted in giving something to the gods in order to get something out of them; that it was, in fact, a species of higgling in the celestial market. It might, indeed, be thus reduced; and was perhaps always in danger of such reduction. But this danger is not confined to the case of sacrifice. It is equally great, and from the same causes, if we regard service, and not sacrifice, as the essential feature of religion. If a man adopts as his motto, in his dealing with the gods, *do ut des*, it matters not whether he gives sacrifices or service: in both cases his principle is purely commercial. It may be business, but it is not religion. The utmost exactitude and the strictest punctilio in the performance of everything demanded by the terms of the covenant produce not religion, but formalism. A bargain is not the less a bargain because one party to it discharges his side of it with the greatest care to do not one jot less—or more—than the terms stipulate for.

Sacrifice, then, like service, may be reduced to huckstering. But are we, or was Plato, justified by the facts of the case in holding that it had in his time been reduced to its lowest terms, to the point at which it is obvious to all beholders that religion has entirely evaporated from it? A glance at Mr. Rouse's *Greek Votive Offerings* (Cambridge: 1902) suffices to show that even in the fourth century B.C., when "Greek religion began to lose its sincerity," and "the religious conception of the gods decays," it had not yet become a mere process of huckstering and higgling; still less had it reached that point of dissolution and decay in the centuries preceding. Memorials of honour and office, originally thank-offerings due to the feeling of gratitude, were in the beginning occasional; but in the long-run such dedications became the regular thing. "It is in the fourth century that this change begins, and it coincides with other changes in the old simple ways, which rob the votive offering of its grace and moral worth, and turn it into a formality" (p. 260). The change has, indeed, stripped the offering of its religious value, but it has not reached the depth of degradation indicated by Plato. It may have become a formality: it has not descended to the level of a bargain. "There are indications that these offerings, with those for victory in the games, were even made compulsory by law" (p. 261), and we might infer from this that the idea was that debts due to the gods should be recoverable at law. But the inference would be incorrect. The offerings were originally the outcome of gratitude, and were thank-offerings. They became customary, and the custom may even have come to be enforced by the law. But even so, the gratitude may not always have utterly vanished. Many of the customary phrases of ceremonial language say much more than is meant by the speaker or writer, and are not taken by the person addressed to mean as much as they say; but they still have some meaning and some value, or they would be dropped altogether. Indeed, many have disappeared entirely; and those which survive are retained because they have some function to perform.

If we turn to the offerings catalogued by Mr. Rouse under the head of those made on occasions of Disease and Calamity, we shall find some, and



perhaps the only, examples which warrant the gloomy view taken of sacrifice generally by Plato, and taken, or mis-taken, by him undoubtedly under the influence of that loathing for the democracy which the condemnation and the execution of Socrates produced in him. Offerings of this class undoubtedly do lend themselves to misinterpretation, both on the part of the observer who watches them made and on the part of the person who makes them. They lend themselves to misinterpretation because, save in the somewhat exceptional cases when the offering is made at once, before the calamity is averted, the vow is not discharged until the prayer has been granted. Thus the whole process lends itself to interpretation as a purely commercial transaction; and the Greek, who was a good business man, is then made to pose as one who does not pay for goods that he has ordered until they are delivered. But though this is a possible interpretation, it is not the only interpretation possible. Prayer may be made, delivery granted, and offerings may be taken to the shrine with heartfelt gratitude for the mercy shown. In such a case it is an insult, gross and unwarrantable, to speak of higgling and huckstering in connection with it.

Thus we have two possible interpretations of the offerings made on occasions of Disease and Calamity, the commercial and the religious. That the religious is in many cases not only a possible, but the only possible, interpretation is beyond doubt. One of the most ancient of these offerings is the dedication of hair. The commercial value of these clippings and shearings may safely be reckoned as *nil*. Yet "it was often vowed in time of peril and offered in gratitude" (p. 245). We may safely compare such offerings, which are, of course, not confined to Greece, with the widespread custom of attaching pins and rags to sacred images, crosses, trees, wells, cairns, and temples. This custom has been investigated by Mr. Sidney Hartland in his *Legend of Perseus*, and he calls attention not merely "to the pins in wells and the rags on trees, but also to the nails in trees, the pins in images, the earth or bricks hung on the sacred tree in India, the stones and twigs, flowers and cocaquids thrown upon cairns, the pellets which constellate Japanese idols, the strips of cloth and other articles which decorate Japanese temples, the pilgrims' names written on the walls of the temple of Kapila on the banks of the Hugli, the nails fixed by the consuls in the Cella Jovis at Rome, and those driven into the galleries or floors of Protestant churches in Eastern France" (ii. 212). Whatever the motive of making these offerings may have been, it is impossible to suppose that they had or were imagined to have any commercial value. The dedication was not a commercial transaction.

But though on the strength of these analogies we may safely claim that many of the offerings made on occasions of Disease and Calamity were neither bribes, nor payments for value received, we must admit that in the case of costly offerings they would tend in that direction, and that their tendency was in a direction utterly fatal to all religious feeling.

But it is necessary to bear in mind that Greek votive offerings are not confined to vows made and paid in time of calamity and disease. Such vows make up but one section out of the ten into which Mr. Rouse distributes Greek votive offerings. The offering of first-fruits and tithes, the dedication of war-spoils, the arms or treasure of the vanquished, the victor's arms, the prizes won in games, the instruments with which they were won, sculptures commemorating the victory—none of them lend themselves to the idea that they were intended or regarded as the discharge of a bargain made between the offerer and the gods to whom they were dedicated. There is little doubt that in all these cases it was the custom, and in some even the law, that offerings should be made. Public opinion required them, and doubtless ensured them in cases

At the same time his experience, of either world, is neither identical with theirs, for it is his and not theirs—a difference which is at times all-important—nor is it ever exactly similar. Where it differs, or appears to differ, there arises the question: Which is he to trust—his or theirs? In the case of the external world, he learns in many cases that theirs, not his, is the trustworthy guide: the wise man learns by the experience of others. With the internal or spiritual world the case is the same: mistakes are just as possible with regard to its content as with regard to what happens and to what may happen in the external world. The individual is not left in entire isolation in it by the community to which he belongs. He is taught, even in the most savage communities, what to expect and how to bear himself. He finds that often, even here, the experience of others saves him from errors which he would himself have committed had he not been guided by the accumulated experience of the community which is communicated to him.

The accumulated experience of the community is preserved in the customs of the community, and those customs are both customary modes of action and customary modes of thought and habits of belief. To argue that he, who in religion adopts and follows the course of thought and action which prevails in the community, thereby proves that he has no true religion, is precisely the same, and for the same reasons, as if we were to argue that the citizen who adopts and follows the moral and civic course of thought and action which prevails in the community, is no good citizen. And this is equally true, whether we take as the basis of the argument the false assumption that a line of action customary in the community cannot be a genuine movement of the individual soul that follows it; or whether we vainly endeavour to limit religion to a purely individual consciousness, and to the very movement itself of the individual soul. It is patently erroneous, whether we are speaking of a member of a political community or of the *civitas Dei*, to maintain or imply that the man who believes in the laws of the State and does his best to act up to them is not a good citizen; or to argue that true citizenship consists in ignoring the fact that there are others, besides oneself, who are citizens and conceivably better citizens than one is oneself.

Thus far we have concerned ourselves with an indispensable quality of the good citizen, viz. readiness to obey the laws of the State. It may also be the duty of the good citizen to try to improve them. Such improvements may amount, and, where positive religions such as Judaism, Christianity, or Islam have been established, they have amounted to revolutions. The founder of the new religion has opened up new regions of the inner, spiritual world, and his followers, so far as they have ventured after him, have the evidence of their own experience to testify to the truth and reality of his revelation. But no new religion is founded unless the new departure calls after it a sufficient number of followers, and unless they frame themselves an organisation. If a new organisation is to be formed, the teaching which is to provoke it must be so markedly different from traditional belief that it can find no satisfactory home in the existing religious community. A break there must be—either an expulsion or a voluntary emigration of the followers of the new doctrine: either the old community or the disciples of the new teaching must feel that rupture is inevitable.

Now, during the period with which the author of *The Makers of Hellas* deals, no such rupture, and no occasion for any such rupture, occurred. New teaching, to a certain extent, there always and continually was; but a collision between the old and the new was rendered practically difficult by the undeveloped and even amorphous condition of the traditional religious life.



Compliance with ritual was demanded by the State, and was so easy that Socrates had no difficulty in rendering it. But belief was bound neither by creed nor dogma. If sacrifice were made to the gods, the demands of the State were satisfied. What was to be believed about the gods had not been reduced to any form of words, and was not imposed by authority in the shape of any creed or dogma. There was a consequent elasticity of belief which easily stretched far enough to cover all the developments of the poets from Homer to Euripides. The State did not prescribe what a man should think, but what he should in certain cases do. It was therefore difficult or impossible for the mere thinker to come into collision with the State. But the very reasons, which made it difficult for his speculations to find anything to collide with, also made it impossible for them to become anything more than individual speculations. For the performance of the inherited usages in religion, spiritual principles were but dimly necessary; and if this practically ensured the traditional usages from unnecessary collision with individual speculations, it also made it practically impossible for men to realise that spiritual principles must be principles of action to be real. Indeed they can hardly be called spiritual principles when the will to enforce them is not strong enough to find or seek the means of so doing. Spiritual they may be, but principles of action they are not, until they are adopted by a community resolved to act on them and enforce them.

It is these potential principles, as they are found in classical Greek literature, and as they were to be realised in Christianity, that are dealt with in *The Makers of Hellas*.







# THE MAKERS OF HELLAS

## § I.—THE LAND

### INTRODUCTION

“Yet I doubt not thro’ the ages one increasing purpose runs.”

—TENNYSON.

“The Race of Man

That receives life in parts to live in a whole,  
And grow here according to God’s clear plan.”

—ROBERT BROWNING.

AMONG all the wanderings and migrations of the ancient races of mankind—wanderings which took place in both East and West during the dim hoary time which we vaguely call the “prehistoric period,” and which resulted in the settlement of the various nations of the world in their several historic homes—there are two which have for us a very special interest. One is the movement of a Semitic race towards the shores of the Mediterranean; the other, that of a branch of the Aryan stock, the stock to which we ourselves belong, towards the shores of the Ægean Sea.

With the story of the first movement—the march of the Chosen People to the Promised Land—we are all perfectly familiar; but the story of the other movement—the march of the Hellenes into the land which they were destined to render so famous—is enveloped in mystery. Whence the Aryans came; where their original home lay, whether in Asia or in Europe; how long the wanderings of the Hellenic branch had lasted before it finally settled on the mainland and islands of Greece and the shores of Asia Minor—all these are questions which are still being investigated, and to which it may, perhaps, never be possible to give an entirely satisfactory answer.

Nevertheless, while recognising this, it has been found possible, out of the fragmentary records of language, to learn the story so far, and to construct a picture, not only of the primitive Aryans themselves, but of their Old Home, wherever that may have lain. These results have been arrived at, as we all know, by what is termed “linguistic palæontology”—by the piecing-together, that is, of the indications afforded by fossil-words—root-words which have been found buried beneath the existing languages of Europe and Asia.<sup>1</sup> All such attempts to penetrate the mystery that surrounds the primitive Aryans are full of the deepest interest—an interest which centres specially round the history of the Græco-Aryans, or Hellenes. They were the first of the European Aryans to begin the work of civilisation—they led the van of culture—and we naturally desire to be able to trace back step by step each phase of their progress, each stage of their journey, until we finally reach the Old Home,

<sup>1</sup> A brief sketch of the method, and of the facts arrived at by its means, is given in § 5 at page 46 of *Hellas*.

where, in the beginning, the Greek dwelt with his brethren—the Indian, the Persian, the Roman, the Celt, the Teuton, the Slav—when as yet there were no such divisions of the Family in existence, but simply the mother-tribe that sent out later the daughter-clans, destined to develop into great and mighty nations.

“Beginnings have charms for us all,” and hence it is that we follow with such eagerness the labours of men like Kuhn, Weber, Max Müller, Schrader, and many others, men who have lifted to a certain extent the veil of darkness, and reconstructed for us that primitive world. Certain very important links in the chain are still wanting, however. As we have seen, the site of the Old Home itself is still a matter of dispute, and therefore any attempt to trace the journey of the Hellenes to their New Home, as we can trace that of the Hebrews to theirs, would be time lost.

And yet, all that concerns the Hellenes is a matter of importance to us—subordinate only to the still more vital interest that attaches itself to the history of the Hebrews. How so? asks the reader. Why should we spend time in drawing any picture at all of those old Græco-Aryans? How does the settlement of a wandering shepherd-tribe on the shores of the Archipelago affect us? What has it, or Hellas either, to do with the present century?

Simply this, that at least one-half of the knowledge, art, and culture of our time has grown—as naturally as a tree from its roots—out of the foundation laid by the descendants of those same rude wandering shepherds.

To understand this, we must look at the unique position which the Hellenes occupy in the world's history. Reverting to the comparison with which we started, we can see that in the great World-plan (if we may use the term with reverence) the two nations whose wanderings we have glanced at—the Hebrews and the Hellenes—seem to have been specially singled out by Providence for the accomplishment of very definite ends. To the Hebrews among Semitic nations was entrusted the custody of a great and priceless treasure—the knowledge of the ONE GOD; whilst to the Hellenes, pre-eminently among all the Aryan nations, was given that task which is best described in the words of St. Paul, as a *seeking* for God, if haply they might feel after Him and find Him.

The best minds of both nations worked consciously and unconsciously towards the fulfilment of this their divinely-appointed mission—the Jews within their narrow bounds keeping alight the torch of truth; the Hellenes feeling after God in nature, seeking for Him in the depths of their own hearts, and everywhere striving to give utterance, in all noble and beautiful forms, to the great thoughts which came to them in answer to this their seeking.

The Jews were thus the great Conservators of the old world, the Hellenes the great Pioneers, for in their seeking and groping after *the* Truth, they found many lesser truths, and worked out many experiments which were all, so to speak, necessary steps in the world-development. It is this which makes the history of the Hellenes so full of interest to us, for we are still reaping the fruits of the seed sown by them. There is well-nigh no department of thought or energy in which the Greeks did *not* experiment. True it is that others had been in the field before them. The Greeks borrowed, as we know, some elements of culture from their Semitic brethren in the East; but this does not affect their character as experimenters, for whatever they borrowed<sup>1</sup> they transformed and transmuted to suit their own needs and their own ideal. There was no such thing as slavish imitation among the Greeks. Of by far the greater number of their experiments, what has been said of their literature

<sup>1</sup> And after all, it was not much, see p. 58 *et seq.* of *Hellas*.



holds good—viz., that “without example or guide before them, they began, as it were in play, to solve the highest tasks, and followed independently their own course.”<sup>1</sup> The Greeks were the grand pioneers of thought; it was they who opened up the paths on which the intellectual culture of the world progresses, and we moderns, on whom the ends of the world have come, learn alike from their successes and their failures. We cannot, therefore, begin a study of the Greek people better than by looking at them first of all in their true character as the world’s greatest PIONEERS and EXPERIMENTERS.

Here, before going further, let us just try to fix in our minds exactly what we mean by the term “experimenters.” The word “*experiment*” has come to be used generally amongst ourselves in a very secondary and contracted sense. To most of us it calls up nothing but the vision of a laboratory, and the various chemical or physical tests associated therewith. But the experiments to which we refer now were not made in a laboratory, neither were they performed in a few hours, neither were they easy. Some of them took centuries to work out; all of them cost infinite labour and pains; in a few, the experimenters were themselves experimented upon and put to the test, for death itself had to be faced. When, therefore, we talk of the Hellenic “experiments,” we use the word in its primary and real significance. Our “experiment,” as we know, is derived from the Latin *ex-perior*, to go through and come out again. Hence it means, properly, not only a something performed, but a something passed through, a something borne for a certain definite aim and end.<sup>2</sup>

In thinking of the great experiment of the Greeks as a nation, then, we must use the word in the sense in which it is true of the life of every one amongst ourselves; “My life—what shall I make of it?” Their national life—what did the Hellenes make of it? And the result of the countless experiments which the Hellenes made in their national life, we sum up in another word—also derived from *ex-perior*—and we say that, on the EXPERIENCE gained by the Hellenes—what they went through in their experiments—more than half the culture of the modern world rests.

## HELLAS AS A LAND OF EXPERIMENTS

Now that we have seen exactly what force to ascribe to the term “experiments,” we must make another halt, and look for a space at the Experimenters themselves and the Land in which they carried on their work. First, then, the LAND.

If the original home of the Greek (as of the other) Aryans is still a *terra incognita*, the very reverse is the case as regards their historic home. Here we are on firm ground; we have no need of hypotheses, conjectures, or theories of any kind, for everything lies spread out before us in the sunlight. Well-nigh every part of Greece has been, or is being, explored; and not only the surface of the country—the land of the living—is known, but its secret recesses—the chambers of the dead—have been unearthed and made to yield up their secrets to us in these latter days.

An account of Hellas itself (and by “Hellas” we mean here the country

<sup>1</sup> Bergk (Theodor), *Griechische Literaturgeschichte*, i. p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> The Latin *ex-perior* is allied to Sans. *par*=to carry over; Gk. *per-áo*=to pass through; Goth. *far-an*=to go. The same root has given the Gk. *peiráo*=to try; *petra*=a test, an experiment, and *empeiria*=experience; the modern High German *Erfahrung*=experience, and *Gefahr*=danger; and, through the Latin, our own *experiment*, *experience*, *expert*, *peril*—all denoting something gone through, worked out, or endured. (G. Curtius, Max Müller, Fick.)

now known as "Greece"),<sup>1</sup> of its physical features, its rivers, mountains, and cities, will be found in the Geographical Section of this work, and therefore here we need trouble ourselves with no details, but shall simply ask the question, and answer it as best we can: Was Hellas adapted to be a land of experiments? In other words: Was it suited to a race whose great business was to be "seeking," striving, constant tentative effort?

## SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT

The first essential for any one with serious work in hand is, that he shall be undisturbed. "Leave me alone!" he says, "don't molest me. Let me work out my plans in peace!"

Well, if we study the physical configuration of the land, we shall find that Hellas answers in a most wonderful way to this primary condition.

In the first place, the country is surrounded on three sides by the sea, which, as in our own little island, "serves in the office of a wall." Hellas abounds in good harbours, as we shall presently see; nevertheless, to vessels which have not access to these harbours her coasts at certain points are extremely dangerous, as her enemies found out more than once to their cost.

Then again, turning to the North, the only land-side, we see that before an invading force could descend upon the country, it would have to surmount a fivefold rampart. Leaving out of sight the mighty Balkan-chain, which barricades the peninsula against the interior of Europe—(1) the first line of defence is the **Cambunian range**, which stretches across the country from **Acrocerania** to **Olympus**, from sea to sea. The only natural break in this mountain-wall is the gorge of Tempe, through which the Peneius wends its way to the sea—a gorge so narrow that it could be held by ten men.

The troubles of an invader, however, would not end here. Olympus crossed, he would find himself confronted by two other great bulwarks—first (2) **Othrys**, then (3) **Ceta**—a network of mountains from which there is only one way of escape. And even supposing that he found this, and finally emerged through Thermopylæ—the Gates of Greece—if he tried to continue his conquering career into Attica, he would be met by (4) the **Cithæron-Parnes** range, whilst further south (5) the chains of **Geraneia** and **Onea** with **Acrocorinthus** and the narrow isthmus lying between them, would all have to be passed before we could advance into Peloponnesus, "the inner heart of Hellas."

Thus, we find Greece provided with no fewer than five great natural lines of defence, any one of which in any other country would have been regarded as of paramount strategic importance. Granted that over each of these ranges Passes exist (two or three in almost each case),<sup>2</sup> the fact remains, that such Passes are merely mountain-paths, narrow glens, which could easily be defended by a handful of resolute men—so watchful was Nature in her care of the little country. Hence, as we have said, Hellas answers admirably to the first condition. It is really a great natural **FORTRESS**, sheltering and protecting its inhabitants. The Hellenes were for many centuries left undisturbed. Their mountains defended them against attack from the north, from the interior of Europe; and the sea protected them on the three other sides; for, in those early days of navigation, not every people looked upon the stormy

<sup>1</sup> For the wider meaning of the terms "Hellas" and "Hellenes," see p. 56 *et seq.* of *Hellas*.

<sup>2</sup> See the account of the Passes given in connection with each State.



waters as an inviting "path." To most it proved a barrier rather than a bridge.

This feature of "protection" was of the greatest importance in the infancy of Hellas. It gave her people time to develop in their own way; and although by-and-by the invader did come down "like a wolf on the fold," he was not permitted to descend upon it until those within were well able to defend themselves. Historians have speculated as to what would have been the probable fate, not only of Greece, but of Europe, had the whole might of the East been let loose upon the land even one generation earlier than the date at which the event actually took place. One thing is certain, that had the experiments of the Hellenes been stopped by invasions of "barbarian" hordes either from north, south, east, or west, the whole civilisation of Europe would have been indefinitely thrown back. So nicely balanced were the time and the trial, that when the Persian arrived he found a people no less able than resolved to fight out the greatest experiment in the cause of NATIONAL FREEDOM which the world has ever seen. The long immunity from invasion, however, which had enabled the Hellenes thus to grow into strength and manly vigour, was due, under Providence, to the geographical configuration of their land and its sheltering mountains.

## DIVERSITY AND INDIVIDUALITY .

Not only, however, does the experimenter require to be safe from intrusion from *without*; to be secure against interference from *within* is a no less pressing necessity for him. And where the same experiment is being worked out by several experimenters, or by several bodies of experimenters, at one and the same time, the necessity for assigning to each a separate and distinct field of operation becomes imperative if the experiment is not to be ruined by perpetual collision and friction on the part of the workmen engaged in it. Now, as we know, the great "Hellenic aggregate"—what we call collectively the Hellenic "nation"—comprised within itself many such distinct bands of workers, and, curiously enough, the country answered precisely to the need of each band for a separate working-place.

When we think of the ancient Greeks, we must take care not to picture them to ourselves as one great undivided nation like the English or the French of to-day. The Hellenic "nation" consisted of a congeries or assembly of many different clans or tribes, perfectly independent one of the other, differing from each other in many ways, and without any political centre or head. Each one of these clans had to live its own life, to work out its own experiments, and, curiously enough, as we have said, provision was made for this. In the great house of Hellas were many separate chambers.

We shall easily understand this if we take a glance at the map. There we shall see that Hellas is not only defended by mountains, but is well-nigh covered by them.

Greece is one of the most mountainous countries of Europe. So innumerable are the cross-bars, the spurs, the branches which strike off from the main systems—to say nothing of the isolated crags and peaks—that but a small proportion, comparatively, of level ground is left. The Peloponnesus especially has been described as a "mass of mountains," a "pile of mountains," a "marble rock," and to this part of Greece a recent writer<sup>1</sup> has aptly applied the legend

<sup>1</sup> Tozer, Rev. H. F., *Lectures on the Geography of Greece*, p. 40.

whereby the Montenegrins are wont to account for the excessive hilliness of their own country. The Maker of all things, they say, was on his way to sow the seed of the mountains, when, having accidentally opened his bag over Montenegro, out rolled the huge boulders pell-mell in every direction, thus giving to their land more than its fair share of rocky obstruction.

The Grecian mountains, however, not excepting those of Peloponnesus, present no hilly chaos bewildering in its confusion; they form a series of grand ranges connected, on what might be described as a systematic and well-defined plan, one with another, and, so far as the northern mountains are concerned, with their great root in the Balkan Alps.

By these interlacings of the mountains and the action of the sea, Greece is divided into a great number of well-defined districts. Thus we have **Thessaly** and **Arcadia**, each with a fourfold mountain-wall, enclosing it on north, south, east, and west; **Bœotia**, divided into two distinct lake-basins; **Doris**, a valley shut in by mountains on three sides; **Attica**, a peninsula, defended on the north by the Cithæron-Parnes range, on the remaining sides by the sea—and so on. Most of the districts which are known to us under a general historic or geographical name are again subdivided by Nature into yet smaller but equally distinct sections. Thus, under the one designation, "**Argolis**," we have a great variety of physical conditions:—a large plain, that of Argos; a peninsula, separated from the plain by mountains, intersected by hills, and divided between three States, Epidaurus, Troezen, and Hermione; three river-valleys, those of Phlius-Sicyon, Nemea, and Cleonæ, running northward from the plain of Argos, and opening on to another plain, stretching along the southern coast of the Corinthian Gulf; and finally, we have Corinth itself with its Isthmus and mountain-gorge. The splitting up of **Arcadia**, again, by the lofty mountains of the interior, first into two halves, east and west, and then into very many distinct plains and valleys, affords a still more striking example of the minute subdivision carried out by the hand of Nature herself.

In each of these "mountain-chambers," then, a separate clan—which may possibly have grown out of the union of one or two families only—would seem to have settled. Sometimes the first comers were strong enough to hold their own; sometimes they were forced to share the land with members of another tribe; sometimes with settlers previously in possession. However this may have been—and we must bear in mind that we have only inferences, not facts, to guide us in tracing the earliest history of Greece—one thing is certain, viz.: that, whatever its origin, each clan, or the State into which it grew, constituted in historic times, to all intents and purposes, a little Nation in itself.

We can easily see how such a state of things was favoured, nay brought about, by the nature of the country, as described above. Each tribe dwelt apart, isolated from its neighbours by a strong mountain-barrier which, in early days, few cared to pass. Each State thus grew up from its political infancy to its manhood, "nestling amid its own rocks," independent in itself, with all that it required within itself, ruled by its own traditions, observing its own manners and customs, drawn to its neighbours by the cord (a strong one certainly) of a common descent, language, and religion—but repelled again by the still stronger force of its own autonomy and self-interest. The result of this was, that National Unity was never attained in Hellas—the nature of the country forbade it.

This minute "splitting up" is the most characteristic feature of the Greek national life, and it is impossible to understand Greek history without taking it into account, for in ancient Greece there were almost as many independent States as there were communities.



In Bœotia alone, to take one instance, the number of independent States would seem to have been originally no less than fourteen.<sup>1</sup> Again, in the little valley of the Peloponnesian Asopus—a river so insignificant that in any other country it would hardly be considered a “river” at all—there flourished two States, Phlius and Sicyon, each of which maintained its independence nobly for centuries, and exhibited the greatest individuality in its religious, political, and artistic tendencies.<sup>2</sup>

Sometimes we find certain States, from ties of blood or pressure of circumstances, entering into relationship with one another and forming confederacies, such as the Bœotian and Phocian Leagues, the early Thessalian Tripolis (union of three cities) of the Dorians, the Attic Tetrapolis (union of four cities) round the Plain of Marathon, or the great Ionian Dodecapolis (union of twelve cities). Such unions existed, however, in historic times, merely for purposes of offence and defence, and any dictation on the part of the chief city of the League, such as was attempted by Thebes in Bœotia, was bitterly resented.

Throughout Greek history nothing is more remarkable than the way in which the people resisted every attempt at centralisation or fusion. A notable instance of this is afforded by the founding of Megalopolis, the Great City, in Arcadia—intended by Epaminondas to be a check upon the ambition of Sparta. No fewer than forty independent little communities were brought in to form the population of the new city; but, notwithstanding the (as we should think) evident advantages to be enjoyed by the citizens of a great democratic centre, many of those communities came against their will, and several went back to their mountain-valleys at the first opportunity. Some of the communities chosen, indeed, positively refused to join the new city. The men of Lycosura, who boasted that their own city was the oldest in Greece, the first ever shone upon by the sun, had to be left in peace. And that this feeling was not mere attachment to their native hills, such as we find among the mountaineers of all lands, is evident from the fact that the people of Trapezus, a tribe of Parrhasii, actually marched out to the farthest corner of the Black Sea and joined a daughter-city of their own there, rather than lose their communal independence.<sup>3</sup>

This cantonal “splitting up,” in which every valley became a little world in itself, undoubtedly had its bad side. It created a great many clashing interests, and by limiting the political horizon it prevented the Greeks from taking that broad view of affairs which is inseparable from true national feeling. He was the true patriot in Hellas who could show his fellow-citizens, not how to promote the welfare of the whole land, but how to secure the aggrandisement of that particular little corner of the land to which he and they belonged. Each of the great States—Argos, Sparta, Athens, Thebes—regarded Herself as the centre of Hellas; and, with the noble exception of Athens during the Persian War, not one could be induced to accept of a subordinate position for the good of the whole. In this way, through mutual rivalry and jealousy, National Unity, as we understand it, was never attained in Hellas. In this way, also, a door was opened for the machinations, first of Macedonia, and later of Rome. Both of these Powers studiously sowed discord among the several States, and then used the feeling of hatred thus fostered to serve their

<sup>1</sup> The number of the Bœotian States seems to have sunk to ten at the time of the Peloponnesian War, to seven at that of the Battle of Leuctra (Thucyd. iv. 91; Diod. xv. 52, 53; Paus. ix. 13, 3).

<sup>2</sup> Curtius (Ernst), *Peloponnesus*, ii. p. 469. Including the town of Orneæ, mentioned in Homer, the little Asopus valley had no fewer than three States.

<sup>3</sup> Paus. viii. 27, cf. Bursian, *Geog. von Griechenland*, ii. pp. 193, 240.

own ends. As has been said over and over again, the internal divisions and quarrels of Greece made her fall inevitable, as soon as a concentrated military Power, like that of Macedonia, arose on her frontiers.

Nevertheless, although from one standpoint this was matter greatly to be regretted—for it ultimately led to the political ruin of Hellas—yet we cannot but see that this very diversity (and even the per-versity into which it sometimes grew) was more favourable to *the* mission of the Hellenes than any National Unity could possibly have been.

“How so?” says an astonished reader; “what could have been better for the Hellenes than that they should have formed one great whole instead of a mere aggregate of paltry little States?”

To have formed one great whole, we reply, might have been better in the end for the Hellenes themselves; but not for us, the *Nachwelt*, and that for four very good reasons:—

(a) First, the seclusion and isolation in which each State passed its youth must have tended wonderfully to strengthen that *individuality* which is so marked a feature in Greek character, and so all-essential an element in the making of experiments.

(b) The second reason (a tolerably selfish one) is, that from the varied experiments of numerous States we moderns have had bequeathed to us a much richer experience than we should have possessed had *one* experiment only been made. The political experiments of Athens, for instance, were not those of Sparta, whilst those of Thebes differed from both. And we can learn from all.

(c) But, thirdly, what shall we say when we reflect that, but for the configuration of the country and the special character which this stamped upon the separate little States, there probably would have been no Hellenic history at all worth recording? Yet this is the opinion of thinkers. It is to her internal, friendly, dividing mountains that Hellas owes much of her greatness. Without these protecting walls, on the one hand, the Hellenic tribes in the earliest times would have fallen a prey to one another, and in the constant friction of petty wars (which, even as it was, seem to have gone on briskly) they would have sunk into lawlessness and barbarism, such as prevailed among the rude peoples on their borders. Without their protecting walls, on the other hand, the Hellenes might have been forced into slavish submission to a native despot, and so shared the fate of the empires of the East.<sup>1</sup> This, however, was rendered impossible by the structure of the country; it offers no one single point which could be used as a military position for dominating the rest of the land and so keeping it in subjection.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, Nature in Hellas did nothing to help forward the foundation of one united State—everything, rather, to promote the development of many little perfectly independent States; and thus she marked out for the Hellenes that path whereby they were enabled to keep to the happy mean between lawlessness on the one hand and slavish submission on the other.

(d) This brings us to our fourth reason, which follows naturally from what has been said. We of the present day are apt to smile at the dimensions

<sup>1</sup> “If Hellas had formed one great State, it would easily have sunk into the same stagnation in patriarchal forms which we meet with everywhere, more or less, throughout the East.” Hermann, *Lehrbuch der Gr. Staatsalterthümer*, § 6: 1875.

<sup>2</sup> “There is no position in Greece analogous to that of the high Castilian plateau, by which the Iberian peninsula is commanded. Neither is the country formed in such a way that the smaller valleys converge into one chief valley, which might thereby acquire such significance for the whole land, as, e.g., the Danube-valley possesses for Austria.”—Neumann und Partsch, *Physikal. Geog. von Griechenland*, p. 187.



of an Hellenic State—often, as we have seen, a single city with the plain at its foot, or the land immediately surrounding it, constituted a “State”—and to make merry over its “parochial” organisation, its tiny fleet, and miniature army. Nevertheless, if we will but take the trouble to think the matter out, we shall see that the little Greek States were precisely fitted for the work which they had to do.

This has been brought out very clearly by Ernst Curtius in his charming Discourse on “Large and Small Cities,” and their relative advantages.<sup>1</sup> After conducting his hearers to the large cities of antiquity—Nineveh, which required a three days’ peregrination to wander through it; Babylon, covering a space so vast that one part was in the hands of the enemy whilst, in the little-witting centre, dancing and festivities were going on—he takes them to the small typical Greek city, a city which might have been found in any district of Hellas, and which might be called with truth a real work of art, inasmuch as it corresponded to Aristotle’s definition of the Beautiful: every part was subordinate to the Whole, and the Whole was not too large to be taken in at a glance. There, on the citadel-rock, were the temples of the guardian deities of the State; beneath lay the market-place and the theatre; beyond the walls a little way were the stadium and the gymnasium. Proportion and Order, governed by artistic intelligence, ruled the whole. Within these clearly defined limits grew up a healthy Public Opinion. The citizens knew one another, and felt themselves members of one community; each would be ashamed to do aught in the eyes of his fellows that might injure the traditions or the laws. Every citizen was within reach of the Herald’s voice—of the Orator’s eloquence.

Compare this picture—clear-cut and definite like a Greek mountain itself—with that of the overgrown monstrosity called a Nineveh or a Babylon. Can we not see how perfectly adapted the microcosm of a Greek “State” was to develop, in the world’s infancy, all the best qualities of a citizen and a patriot? The inhabitants of a Nineveh or a Babylon were not “citizens”; they were mere units, ciphers valued only as swelling a gigantic total—a total too cumbrous and unwieldy to be able to exert its own strength. The citizens of a Greek State, on the other hand, were the rational members of an intelligent organism. Each knew that something depended upon *him*, that by the wisdom of his counsel or the cunning of his hand—yea, by the strength of his sinews or the fleetness of his foot—he could serve his Mother-city. Each had a voice in the passing of the laws, and thus grew up the sense of political responsibility, and with it the necessity for political liberty.

Now we can understand, can we not? something of the passionate love with which the men of Trapezus clung to their city, insignificant and inartistic as it probably was; the dogged resistance which they opposed to the attempt to merge their political individuality in that of a large and strange organism. Another feeling also was at work to deepen the sense of patriotism in a Greek—the fact that outside of his own city he had no rights whatever. This, however, will be more conveniently discussed in our next section. Here we have said enough to show how admirably fitted the Greek States were for the work which they had to do. In these little “parochial” States were made experiment after experiment in the art of government—experiments which, one and all, are intensely interesting in their gradual working-out, inasmuch as in no two States were the results arrived at the same. How to secure the due liberty of the individual with the due liberty of the whole is a question not to be solved in a

<sup>1</sup> Curtius (E.), *Grosse und Kleine Städte*, reprinted in *Alterthum und Gegenwart*, i. p. 369.

day; and hence, all sorts and forms of rule—monarchical, aristocratical, democratical, tyrannical in a good sense and tyrannical in a bad sense—had to be tried before the harmony of the Ideal State could be attained.

As yet, however, we are a long way from the harmony of the Ideal State. The Græco-Aryans have many preliminary experiments to make before they attain to this—if, indeed, they may be said ever to have fully attained to it. Nevertheless, the goal is always in view, and here are the separate sheltered valleys and plains waiting to afford a scene of action for the experiments. Nature, at least, has done her best to give each little Republic fair play, and make the ideal possible.

Just, then, as the giant bulwarks on the north and on the encircling seas gave protection to the whole, and secured freedom to the nation, so, in a like manner, did the intersecting ranges of the interior, and the friendly bays and gulfs which run up far inland to meet them, defend the freedom of the individual State, and render possible the gaining of freedom by the INDIVIDUAL CITIZEN.

### INTERCOURSE—PROGRESS—EXPANSION

The next essential (although a later one) for an experimenter is—communication with others. At first, his own efforts engross all his attention; but afterwards, when he begins to feel strong within himself, when his plans have taken definite shape, he wishes to find out what others are doing, what progress they have made. As iron sharpens iron, so is a certain mental friction necessary to keep the faculties free from any trace of rust, and the wits keen and bright. Now, how did Hellas answer to *this* condition?

“Very badly indeed,” says a reader. “So, at least, I should imagine. The separating mountain-walls must have been effectual in *preventing* intercourse.”

True—but you forget that almost all the Greek cantons opened, on one side at least, to the SEA. If the mountains acted as separating walls, the sea was a “uniting path”; and that the Greeks knew very early how to make use of it in this way there is no doubt. The “watery ways” of Homer are not the rivers of Greece, for these are not navigable;<sup>1</sup> they are the seas that encompass Hellas on every side except the north. The sea was the scene of some of the earliest experiments of the Hellenes, possibly of that very experiment which brought them into their historic home; supposing, that is, the theory of the Asiatic origin of the Aryans to be true, and this theory has been by no means yet conclusively disproved.<sup>2</sup>

It is believed on very good grounds that the Aryans had not seen the sea before the Dispersion,<sup>3</sup> and, if this were the case, it must have required no

<sup>1</sup> The Achelous in Northern Greece, and the Alpheius and Pamisus in Peloponnesus, may be termed “navigable,” but only for light boats and for a short way.

<sup>2</sup> For the probable route taken by the Aryans on this hypothesis, see *Hellas*, p. 51 *et seq.* (“The Dispersion.”)

<sup>3</sup> Whether the Aryans had seen the sea before the Separation or not, is still a keenly contested point. That they had *not* seen it, however, may fairly be inferred from four facts:—

(a) There is no name for the SEA common to both the north-western (European) and south-eastern (Asiatic) Aryans. The names common to the European branch are as follows:

Lat., *Mar-e*; Goth., *mar-ei*; Lith., *mar-es*; Old Slav, *mor-je*; Ir., *muir*.

Corresponding to the Sanscrit, *mar-u-s*, “desert.” All are probably traceable to a root *mar*, which has given the Latin *mors*, “death”—our *mortal*.

In this European list, as will be noted, Greek and Albanian are wanting. The Greeks coined names for themselves.

The names for the sea in the Asiatic branch (Indian and Persian), are also quite different, and



small courage and resolution to make the grand experiment, and trust themselves for any distance upon it. The story of the effort seems to be contained in the names which the Greeks coined for the sea. They called it not only *Hals*, "the briny"; *Thalassa*, "the troubled"; and *Pelagos*, "the striker" (from the beating of the waves); but *Pontos*, "the pathway." It is as though at some crisis of their history, when it had become necessary to cross the sea, and most of those concerned were shrinking back in fear and dismay from venturing on the stormy deep, some dauntless spirit had risen up in their midst and said

only coined in historic times (cf. G. Curtius, *Principles of Greek Etymology*, 468; Max Müller, *Biographies of Words*, pp. 109, 152).

Dr. Schrader, *Handelsgeschichte*, p. 40, regards the connection of *mare*, &c., with Sans. *marus*, "desert," as "highly improbable"; but he suggests no better meaning to take its place. It is on the face of it by no means improbable that the name, "dead water," should have been given by a primitive people to the water of the sea, when they noticed its effect on vegetation, and found out by experience that it was not fit to drink.

(b) SALT would seem to have been unknown to the Aryans before the Dispersion. The two great branches have no common name for it, and the oldest Indians and Persians do not appear to have been acquainted with it at all (Schrader, *Sprachvergleichung und Urgeschichte*, p. 373; V. Hehn, *Das Salz*, p. 16 et seq.).

Hehn suggests that the Aryans, as they went west, would probably meet around the Aral and Caspian Seas with lakes, dry and half-dry, filled with salt-crystals, remains in the desert of the seas which once overspread this region. Here for the first time, he supposes, they would see and taste the precious mineral. But this is taking too much for granted. The fact remains, as Hehn himself admits, that the Greeks, at least, always associated salt with the sea. To Homer, men who do not know the sea are also men who mingle no salt with their food (*Od.* xi. 122). If salt had been known in the earliest times, language would have shown some trace of it; for whenever its purifying and preservative qualities were discovered, salt was considered *sacred* by the nations of antiquity, and was sprinkled by them on their sacrifices, whilst sea-water was used in religious purifications (see under "Eleusinia," *Hellas*, p. 270, for an instance in point).

(c) FISH.—Thirdly, there is no common name for fish, either for fish generally, or for special kinds, in the Aryan vocabulary (Schrader, *Sprachvergleichung*, pp. 171, 371). This is one great reason why the Aryans should not have come from the north of Europe, as maintained by Dr. Penka, for the Scandinavian *kjökken-moeddings* are full of fish- and shellfish-remains, as proved by Professor Prestwich; in them periwinkles, oysters, and mussels, as well as the bones of herrings and four or five other species of fishes, have been found. Assuredly, had these formed part of the usual diet of the Aryans before the Dispersion, their names would have been carried by the various members of the family to their new homes (Müller, *Biog. of Words*, p. 117).

(d) NAVIGATION.—A fourth inference may be drawn from the paucity of nautical terms in the common Aryan vocabulary. On this point no one has spoken more strongly than Dr. Schrader himself (*Handelsgeschichte*, p. 41). "Even supposing," he says, "that the Western Aryans had really reached the sea at a period in which, ethnologically, they still stood very near to each other, it by no means follows that they had at that period ventured to trust themselves upon its stormy waves in the frail barks in which they sailed upon their lakes and rivers. The fact is, that the Indo-Germanic vocabulary knows only two terms for navigation in the very earliest times. These are Ship and Oar. Of agreement in such terms as boat, mast, sail, sail-yard, anchor, rudder, keel, there is not a trace in the collective languages, either between Greek and Latin, or between Slav and German, or between Slav and Lithuanian, &c., &c."

Navigation, therefore, seems to have played a very subordinate part in the life of the old Indo-Germanic races; and in accordance with the testimony of language is the fact that it is almost never mentioned in the *Avesta*, and but rarely in the *Rig-Veda*, the oldest Aryan book in existence (Schrader, *Sprachvergleichung*, p. 407).

Summing up, now, our four facts, the argument may be put in a nutshell, thus: Is it credible that a primitive people, born and bred in sight of the sea, should have transmitted to their descendants no distinctive name either for the deep itself, or for its fish, or for its salt flavour, a flavour never forgotten when once tasted? Further, is it credible that they should have handed down no name for the technical objects connected with a ship, or even for the winds which play so prominent a part in the seaman's life? (Schrader, *Handelsgeschichte*, p. 41). This clearly is a case in which the inference from the silence of language must be allowed due weight, and that inference would seem to be that, previous to the Dispersion, the Aryans had not seen the sea. Let us recollect, however, that the last word has not yet been spoken on the subject.

to the proposer of retreat, as Diomedes, the Græco-Aryan, said on a time to Agamemnon (*Iliad*, ix. 40 *et seq.*): "Think ye, Sir, that *all* the sons of our race are cowards and weaklings? Let those flee who will to flee! As for me and mine, we shall stay, for with a God are we come. And as for this Thalassa, which scares ye all, over its waters we mean to go. They shall be to us PONTOS, a PATH, and a highway to that unknown land that lies beyond."<sup>1</sup>

Whether the name originated in any such combination of circumstances or not—every significant name, let us remember, has a story behind it—we shall never know. Certain it is, however, that the word "Pontos" gives us a clue to the after-history of the people—a whole world of energy and determination lies hidden in it. For, the men who gave the name of "highroad," "uniting path," to the unknown deep, at a time when all the other European Aryans could find no better designation for it than the "barren," "the waste," the "dead water," were—whether they came from North or South—whether they gave the name during their migration, or after it—these men were the ancestors of a great and noble people. Precisely "of such stuff" were the Makers of Hellas.

That the later Greeks recognised the effort required to attain the mastery over the sea is proved by the grand ode in the *Antigone* (Soph., *Antig.*, 332 *et seq.*), in which Sophocles describes the wonders wrought by man—how he has furrowed Earth herself, the oldest of the gods, with the plough, and bridled the horse, and tamed the never-wearied bull of the mountain, and developed Speech, and organised cities. In the very front of these achievements, as first and foremost of all, the great instance of the astounding boldness of Man, the poet places this—that man has made his way across the grey sea in the teeth of stormy winds and amid the surging billows.

We do not need now to be told that seamanship was one of the arts developed by the Hellenes themselves, not one of those which they borrowed from the East. We assume that they succeeded the Phœnicians in the command of the Mediterranean, and therefore we are apt to infer that they derived their seafaring knowledge from these first mariners. Not so. That Greek seamanship was entirely of native origin and home growth is proved by the testimony of language. The nautical terminology of Homer is rich and original, derived neither from a Semitic nor from any other Aryan source. The Greeks must have been at home on the sea before they knew the Phœnicians (O. Schrader, *Handelsgeschichte*, p. 43).

The Hellenes, in fact, like the English, could not help being sailors—their circumstances compelled it. Hellas, indeed, is not an island, but it resembles England in this respect, that but few places in the country are out of reach of the sea. Little Greece, whose superficial area is much less than that of Portugal, has a greater seaboard than that of Spain and Portugal taken together. A glance at a map will show the reason of this. The coastline of Spain and Portugal, and also of Italy, is comparatively regular, while that of Greece is jagged, contorted, and strongly marked by countless indentations—arms of the sea, bays, and gulfs. The irregularities of the coast of Greece are no less remarkable than are the irregularities of her surface. Everywhere the action of the sea is apparent in the formation of the land, which, indeed, is so cut up by the beating of the waves on either side (in combination with other physical

<sup>1</sup> *Pontos* is thought to be related to *patos*, "a path," and allied to *pons*, *pontis*, "a bridge," not a barrier. "To the Greeks the sea is the uniting path (G. Curtius, *op. cit.*, 349; Kuhn's *Zeitschr.*, i. 34; Max Müller, *Science of Language*, ii. p. 355). Fick (l. iii. p. 135) assigns as the meaning of *pontos*, "broad, spread-out." If this meaning had been in the minds of the Greeks, would they have used the name to denote a narrow strait like Helles-pont?



causes) as to form not *one* great peninsula, like the Pyrenæan or the Italian, but a succession of small peninsulas, sharply defined—such as Attica, the Argolic, Laconian, Messenian, and so on.

This great highway, then, was open to all or nearly all. No district of Hellas, except Arcadia, Phlius, and the Pindus range, is cut off from the sea. Every State possessed its link of communication with its neighbours and with the outer world.<sup>1</sup>

That the Hellenes should have had intercourse with the outer world also was of great importance, and this the geographical position of the land ensured. The South-Eastern extremity of Europe, Hellas lies, as it were, between three worlds. Opposite stretch the most fertile parts of Africa—the Egypt of ancient days, with its mysterious religion, its curious art and learning. Nearer, across a sea studded with chains of islands, each of which, in the infancy of navigation, served as a stepping-stone to the mariner, lie the shores of Asia, the home of the earliest civilisation. To the west, separated only by waters whose breadth in some places does not exceed forty miles, is Italy, in these old times the representative of unexplored regions beyond. Thus stood Hellas, between the Old World and the New—the gateway, as it were, through which the primitive knowledge of the East was to enter upon a fresh and more vigorous life of progress in the West.

But while her geographical position thus suggested great possibilities, there were not wanting indications, clearly marked indications, as to how these possibilities were to become actualities. To return once more to our old comparison: Just as the Hebrews were kept to *their* mission by stringent, legal, and social barriers—Divine commands, which prohibited them from mingling with the nations around—so, in like manner, were the Hellenes assisted by deterring natural barriers in keeping faithful to the mission entrusted to *them*. While Hellas was admirably placed for intercourse with the older nations of the world—the peoples who had preceded her in the march of civilisation—she was effectually prevented from seeking intercourse with races from whom she could learn nothing. From the rude barbarians of the north she was separated, as we have already seen, by her mountains; and from the tribes on the west (who were only just beginning to feel their way upwards, when the Hellenes were already far advanced in culture), she was cut off by the nature of the coast—in early days an effectual hindrance to intimate communication. The western shores of Hellas are not well suited to navigation. There are few natural harbours, and where the coast is not lined by rugged cliffs, it abounds in marshes and lagoons. With the features of Western Greece we shall become more familiar as we proceed. Here it is sufficient for our purpose to note that, during the earliest development of Hellas, intercourse with the outer world took place mainly on the eastern side, which is rich in deep bays and good natural harbours.<sup>2</sup> When the Hellenes began to be strong in themselves, and to emerge from mere tribal life, then

<sup>1</sup> This even Arcadia contrived to procure for a time by the annexation of a coast-strip in Triphylia (Southern Elis), so that an old writer, Dicaearchus, could say with truth that all the States of Peloponnesus lay on the sea (*Cic. ad Att.*, vi. 2). Arcadia, moreover, must in very early times have had communication with the sea, if, as Pausanias tells us (viii. 3, 5), she was the first to send out colonies to Italy (*cf.* E. Curtius, *Pel.*, i. 167).

<sup>2</sup> “We cannot fail to recognise the incomparably more favourable formation of the eastern side of Peloponnesus for commerce and intercourse by sea. The east is the front, the face of the peninsula, which is thereby directed and summoned, as it were, to connection with Asia—to take up and transplant the older civilisation of the East” (E. Curtius, *Pel.*, i. 21). The same rule holds good in an even more remarkable manner of Northern Greece, as we shall presently see.

they came into active communication with the peoples of the west—but not until then. Thus, by a second set of natural circumstances (*cf.* p. 11, *c*), they escaped the danger of becoming barbarised, and the work of experimenting went on unchecked by alien influences.

And now, since we have taken PROGRESS as the key-note to this section—having said so much about the “watery roads” of Hellas generally, let us just take a brief glance at some of the special ways in which they may be supposed to have assisted in the development of civilisation and of the national character.

1. *Material Progress.* One fact, to start with, is patent, viz., that whenever the different little communities of Hellas were ripe enough for intercourse with each other, the means of securing such intercourse were at hand without the necessity of keeping to the land. Had the Hellenes been restricted to the interior, progress would have been indefinitely delayed, for road-making in such a country as theirs is attended with great difficulties. On the shores of every part of the country, however, as we know, dashed the sea, with its deep blue waves—far more beautiful than our own grey northern waters. And, as we also know, the spirit of adventure, the courage to try and to trust the unknown element, was there equally with the opportunity. Without this, indeed, the opportunity in early days would have been useless. But, further, another motive, as strong perhaps as the love of adventure, urged on the primitive Hellene, and this was curiosity. It was no broad, limitless expanse of ocean that he looked out upon. Everywhere and from every part of Hellas (excepting the western coast of Messenia and Elis) one or more islands are to be seen, while beyond them the coast of another part of the mainland may often be descried. If, therefore, these first Hellenes obeyed the very natural instinct which bade them ask: What sort of land is that perpetually within sight?—What manner of men may they be that dwell thereon?—they could make the venture and satisfy their curiosity safely, for the goal was in sight, and the well-known mountain-peaks of their home would serve as landmarks to guide them back again.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, the island-strewn seas of Greece, and her deeply-indented coasts—offering in their sheltered bays an experimental school for seamanship—were pre-eminently adapted to forward the development of navigation in the earliest times. Even the winds and the currents conspired by their regularity to assist. Certainly, the Archipelago is not without its dangers; to the sudden squalls which sweep round its islands, its ancient name “Ægæan” is probably due.<sup>2</sup> Their dread, moreover, of the opposing winds and currents which meet round one of the southerly points of Peloponnesus—Cape Malea, in Laconia—the Greeks expressed in the proverb: “Double Malea, and forget your home.” That the Hellenes were familiar enough both on land and sea with the phenomena of great and mighty winds is amply proved by passages in their history, by the honours paid to Boreas, the North Wind, and by the curious survival of the earliest Nature-religion mentioned by Pausanias at Titane, in Achaia, where was an Altar of the Winds, and where were shown four pits in which the powers of the atmosphere were pacified and soothed by magical incantations (Paus., ii. 12, 1).

Nevertheless, during the summer months at least—the season of navigation—the mariner knew what to look for. He knew that “through the midst of the sea a current went from north to south, accompanied on both sides along the coast by contrary currents, and he made use of one or the other,

<sup>1</sup> Neumann und Patsch, *Physikalisch Geographie von Griechenland*, ch. ii.

<sup>2</sup> See *Hellas*, p. 42.



according to the direction in which his vessel sailed" (Neumann und Partsch, *op. cit.*, p. 149). Even the Etesia, again, the rough northern winds of July and August, are not exempt from this characteristic of regularity. The seaman knows exactly when to expect them, and can arrange accordingly. The name "Etesia" itself means "yearly" or regularly-recurring winds.

Granted that the early Hellenes made use of their "highroad" only too frequently for the piratical attacks on one another of which Thucydides tells us (i. 5), there can be no doubt that intercourse by sea was a great factor in the development of civilisation as well as of piracy. The Hellene could launch his little skiff, and, taking with him such native products as would ensure for him a friendly reception, could visit, in the course of a week, a dozen sovereign States, and see for himself what each was doing, how it was governed, what progress it was making in the useful arts, and so on. Granted, again, that most of the little States were pretty much on the same level as regards technical skill, it nevertheless stands to reason, from the variety of natural productions in Greece, that one would excel in one department of industry, another in a second; and, as has been well said, it was of far more importance to the primitive man that he should see, say, the art of dressing wool one stage further advanced than his own technique admitted of, than that he should see the most superb purple robe, wrought and coloured he knew not how (Neumann u. Partsch, *op. cit.*, p. 134).

That the primitive Hellene did see such dazzling works of art as purple robes, fit for the shoulders of kings and chieftains, and that he must thereby have been rendered very much dissatisfied with his own rough, undyed, not-over-savoury sheep-skin coat, is an undoubted fact. And that he knew, moreover, of the existence of sharp swords and axes of metal, polished and ornamented in a way which, when compared with his own rude instruments, must have caused him (artist from the first) much grief of soul, is another undoubted fact. For he had only to permit the landing of strangers on his own coast, or to visit the factories of the same strangers at Corinth, or on the islands of Thasos and Cythera, or in certain other places, to see all these wonders for himself.

The very same island-streams which were so helpful to the Greek sailors, were helpful also to these Eastern peoples—Phœnicians and Lycians—who paid them visits from time to time. Across the bridge formed by the islands of Rhodes, Carpathos, Casos, Crete, Cythera, with the intervening little islets, came the Phœnicians, and although their coming was anything but an un-mixed benefit to the Hellenes, as we shall presently see, yet there can be little doubt, not only that the latter learned from them in the material arts—weaving, dyeing, and working in metals—but that they were indebted to the Phœnicians for the introduction of the system of Weights and Measures afterwards used throughout the land, and of the Alphabet—the foundation of their literary enterprises.<sup>1</sup>

While admitting, however, that the intercourse with these Eastern visitors must have been stimulating to the Greeks, we must guard against attributing too much weight to this factor in their development, for they soon became independent of it. If they went to school to the Phœnicians, they speedily outstripped their teachers.

2. *The Breaking-down of Prejudice.*—In yet another way did the "watery roads" of Hellas help on progress. By rendering intercourse easy, they brought the different little clans together, and so broke down prejudice by

<sup>1</sup> See *Hellas*, p. 58.

making them acquainted with each other. In very early times, as we know, such acquaintance is feared rather than desired. This point is so important that, at the risk of wearying the reader, we must pause for a moment to consider it.

Not only is there the testimony of history, but we have the evidence of language to prove that the Greeks of the earliest times were by no means ambitious to make the acquaintance of their neighbours. The words "neighbour," as applied to an adjacent people, and "enemy" were, in fact, synonymous in ancient times.

Says Dr. Schrader on this subject (*op. cit.*, p. 4): "The primitive man knows only the interests of his own district, of his own clan; he considers, therefore, as his equals only those living with himself, those united by the same necessities, and the same traditions and customs [*Satzungen, ius*]. The stranger in a primitive community enjoys neither protection nor rights. Nay more, since at any moment invasion might come upon the land from without, 'neighbour' is essentially identical with 'enemy,' and the stranger is regarded with suspicion and hatred. Hence, to destroy him, or, at least, to keep him off the home ground, is a good work."

"Surely," says the reader, "the Greeks were never on so low a level as this! What about that beautiful relation of the host and the guest-friend, the *xenia*, that we find in Homer?"

Ah! we are very far from Homer yet, and it is clear from the evidence of language that the Aryans, on their entrance into history, were still at the stage of distrust and suspicion, or but just quitting it. That the Greeks were ever on the level of the Scyths of the Pontus—who, as Strabo tells us (p. 300), sacrificed all foreigners, eating their flesh, and making drinking-cups of their skulls—we do not for a moment imply. Nevertheless, they shared this hatred of foreigners; for the very word *xenos*, which came to have so beautiful a meaning, is believed to have signified originally "the slayer," "the injurer," "the enemy." Nor were the Greeks alone in thus detesting foreigners, for our own Anglo-Saxon *gaest*, with all the allied Northern words, and the Latin *hostis*, have the same root-meaning (*Schrader, op. cit.*, p. 5 *et seq.*).

So much for the testimony of language. Then we have it on the authority of Thucydides that the earliest Hellenes kept up a kind of piratical warfare on their neighbours, and that, far from being ashamed of this, they gloried in it (Thuc., i. 5); those outside of their own community, that is, they regarded as fair objects of attack and plunder.

This was the state of affairs in the earliest ages, and the same spirit in a milder form presents itself everywhere in historic times. It is very necessary at the outset that we should understand this, for it is closely connected with the peculiar development of Greek political life. It was only in his native State that a Greek had any rights at all. Outside of this, he was utterly helpless and friendless. Hence the intensity of affection with which every Hellene clung to his own Metro-polis, his Mother-city. Hence, also, the close connection in antiquity between political and individual liberty. It was the State alone that made the Hellene a freeman—outside of her he was not a man, but a "thing," possessed of no rights whatsoever. Here we have the roots of slavery as it exists in antiquity, and also of that distrust of the outside world which regarded the outer world as a power that might bring a man into the terrible condition of slavery. Now we can understand how it was that the members of the little Parrhasian tribe, whose story we know,<sup>1</sup> preferred

<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, p. 7.



to wander out of Peloponnesus altogether, rather than become merged in the "new-fangled" Great City, where they had no certain guarantee that their status as citizens and freemen would be recognised. Now we can understand also how it was that the conservative Spartans kept up, even in later times, their early restrictions against foreigners—and let us recollect that a citizen of any other State (say, an Argive, an Athenian, or a Theban) was an alien on Spartan soil. Now also we can understand how it was that, even in liberal, cosmopolitan Athens, as in Rome, every resident foreigner required to be under the protection of a native citizen, who was, as it were, answerable before the law for him.

This long digression proves that in antiquity there existed a spirit far more formidable than any mountain-walls to that progress which results from international intercourse. Now, how was it overcome?—for overcome it certainly was to a great extent.

The answer to this belongs properly to the history of Greek experiments. Here we would only say that religion played a great part in effecting the change; not only by the beautiful idea of Zeus Xenios—Zeus, the god of the sacred guest-right—but by bringing the various little peoples together in a peaceful way, and so developing the feeling of oneness, of nationality. That it was possible, however, for different cities to join in the worship of the same god—as, for instance, that of the Delian Apollo, or the Calaurian Poseidon—or to take part in the great national festivals which brought them together in a friendly and joyous manner—especially in that greatest of all, the festival of the Olympian Zeus, during which all hostilities ceased, and the "peace of the god" (the *ekecheiria* = "holding of hands") reigned throughout Hellas—that all this was possible was mainly due to the facility of intercourse by sea. Then, commerce followed in the wake of religion, and the Greeks found out that strangers had a good as well as a bad side. Viewed in the light of possible purchasers of the commodities which they had to offer, even "barbarians" became bearable.

Thus, by bringing the various peoples together face to face, and making them known to each other, the "watery ways" did good service. The vague dread which lay at the root of the prejudice against foreigners vanished—in so far as it may be said to have vanished at all in antiquity—before the sunshine of a nearer intercourse.<sup>1</sup>

3. *Colonisation*. And thus was paved the way for that wondrous expansion which took place when the various peoples of little Hellas—either driven by political necessity or beginning to feel their native bounds too strait—sent forth colony after colony to found that Greater Hellas which sprang up on every adjacent coast: in Asia Minor and the Islands, in Southern Italy and Sicily, in Africa, in Thrace and Macedonia, around the northern shores of the savage Pontus itself, until, as Cicero puts it, Hellas appeared "woven as a border to the land of the Barbarians" (*De repub.*, ii. 4).

And now let us fancy (if we can) a Hellas without the sea—a Hellas protected and overspread by mountains, as we know it, but lying inland, with no outlet except its narrow mountain-passes. Or imagine (if you like) a perfectly flat Hellas, with no internal obstacles to communication, but also lying inland. Would this wondrous expansion have taken place? Doubtless to some extent it would, since expansion seems to be a law of the Aryan peoples; but it would

<sup>1</sup> This will be the more readily understood if we reflect on the change which the development of steam-navigation has produced in our own time in the ideas of John Bull regarding his neighbours on the continent of Europe—a change analogous in kind, if not in degree, to that which went on among the enterprising Greeks of antiquity.

have taken place infinitely more slowly, with infinitely more difficulty and suffering, without that brilliancy which forms so striking a feature of Greek development. Had the concourse of men belonging to different Hellenic races—Æolians, Achæans, Ionians—that streamed to the first great trading centres of the wider Hellas—Smyrna, Miletus, and the other Ionian coast-towns of Asia Minor—nothing to do with that wonderful phenomenon, the appearance of an *art*-dialect—of a Homer? The influence of the sailor element—to put the argument on practical ground—is very distinctly traceable, if not in the *Iliad*, at least in the *Odyssey*, and the marvellous adventures of its hero. Moreover, it was in these first great centres that the beginnings, not only of Poetry, but of Science and Philosophy were made—intercourse with other minds stimulating thought and calling forth, like an electric current, greater warmth and more energetic activity (E. Curtius, *Grosse und kleine Städte*, loc. cit.).

The influence of the sea has been well summed up by a recent writer, K. Woermann, *Die Landschaft in der Kunst der alten Völker*, p. 83 *et seq.*, as follows:—

“The sea and the sea alone is the element which unites the different isolated parts of the Hellenic landscape. One might almost say that no Greek city which became the representative of a thought helpful to progress (*Kulturgedunke*) lay far from the sea. Most of them lay immediately on the sea, or had, at least, from their Acropolis the sight of its blue waves. This is true, of course, as regards the Islands, which played a most important part in the development of Hellenic culture. But it is true also of the coast of Asia Minor, which is sharply marked off from the interior. This was inhabited by Greek races; the character of the landscape harmonises with that of the rest of Hellas, and shares in this dependence on the sea. Similar bays run up here also into hilly coast-lands, and here, as there, the shores are bordered by a rich circle of islands both large and small. In fact, Hellas, the Hellas of the history of progress, consists mainly of three parts: the western coast-strips of Asia Minor, the eastern coast of the opposite peninsula (European Greece), and the Archipelago lying between. But the Archipelago is neither the smallest nor the most insignificant part of Hellas. Any one who has sailed through it and has observed its beautifully-formed islands as they appear one after the other, sometimes crowned with a joyous wreath of green, sometimes rising up in naked, often curiously carved-out rocks, at the foot of which the white foam dashes—Ægina, Syros, Melos, Andros, Paros, Naxos, Tenos and Myconos, Lesbos and Chios, as they present themselves to the traveller on the voyage from Athens to Smyrna and from Smyrna to Cape Malea—any one who remembers, moreover, the rôle which these islands played in the history of culture, some as having given birth to great poets or artists, others as the sites of much frequented sanctuaries, many intimately associated with the favourite myths of the Greeks—all important as intermediate anchorages between the eastern and the western mainlands of the old Hellenic world: on any one, we say, who has seen and reflected upon all this, the significance of these island-groups for ancient civilisation, and the significance of the sea as the means of spreading this civilisation, will be at once and decidedly apparent. To think of a Hellenic landscape in the fruitful time of Hellas without the sea is, therefore, hardly possible.”

Thus, in a *third* particular, the little land of Hellas was provided with exactly what she needed. Essential as were the protecting and dividing mountains in early days, they would have acted injuriously later by cramping and confining the energies of the race had not the glorious outlet of the sea existed, to give scope to every latent power and lead on to countless experiments.



4. *Development of Character.* Most of us are familiar with Mr. Grote's famous dictum on certain aspects of the Greek national character. That "their position made the Greeks at once mountaineers and mariners" (*Hist. of Greece*, ii. p. 154), is a saying which conveys a good deal more than lies on the surface. We may still further express the effect of both factors on the Hellenic development by saying that "the Mountains made the Greeks Maintainers—of the old; the Sea made them Seekers—after the new"—in other words, Experimenters. *Pontos* and *pioneering* are connected by more than alliteration. We can easily see this by examining the two types of character which, as Mr. Grote points out, undoubtedly predominated in Hellas.

Amid his mountains the Greek grew up a shepherd and a hunter, with all the qualities coincident with the pastoral life: he was brave and hardy, simple, often boorish in his habits and tastes, conservative, a "stickler" for old customs, and desirous of moving on in the old groove.

At the same time, within reach of every Greek (with the exception, as before mentioned, of the Arcadians and the mountaineers of Mount Pindus), within sight constantly of very many, was another element, differing altogether from solid mother earth—sparkling, flashing perpetually under the sunny sky, inviting and inciting him to try his luck upon it. Hence, we have also another element in the Hellenic character—the versatile, adventurous, quick-witted sailor-element; the thirst for novelty, the inquisitive seeking after fresh ideas, the readiness of adaptation to new ways and new customs, the tolerance of what is unusual in the habits of others.

The first type of character was seen most markedly in the Arcadian, who, shut up within his mountains, came least into contact with other peoples; the last, in the Ionian of Miletus. Between these two extremes, there were many shades and varieties. It will easily be surmised, however, that experimenting, and with it, progress, went on more rapidly among peoples of the mariner—than amongst those of the mountaineer-type; and this inference is borne out by facts.

5. *Development of Liberty.* Finally, there only remains to be noted that one influence of the sea which, to some minds, transcends all others. If the mountains gave the Hellene the instinct of sturdy resistance, of dauntless defiance, the sea breathed into him the ardour to do and to dare all in defence of his mountain-home:

"The mountains look on Marathon  
And Marathon looks on the sea,"

and it was with these "two voices" ringing in their ears that the Hellenes fought out the world's first and greatest battle in the cause of freedom.<sup>1</sup> To the Greek, the mountains and the sea were the double pledge that the country which they protected and encircled was the heritage of her children—theirs to enjoy in freedom. He would have been dull and passionless indeed through whose veins the blood should not have coursed more swiftly at the very thought of any attempt to wrest from him what the gods so manifestly had sealed to him as his own!

<sup>1</sup> If, as we learn, the first draft of these lines was—

"Euboea looks on Marathon  
And Marathon looks on the sea"—

Byron shewed his keen insight into Greek character by the alteration. (See *Works*, p. 637, ed. of 1837.)

## CLIMATE AND ENERGY

Coming now to a closer inspection of the little land, we are reminded that there are certain conditions of more vital importance as regards Progress than even protection and the opportunity for expansion. One grand essential for successful work is, that the worker shall possess "a sound mind in a sound body." Doubtless from the first, as now, some of the world's best work was done by strong minds imprisoned within feeble bodies. Here, however, we are speaking of the race, and for the race it was all-important that it should be placed in conditions favourable to health and vigour. How did Hellas answer to this condition?

So remarkably that, in one case, it attracted the attention of the Hellenes themselves. Thus, Plato says (*Timæus*, p. 24 C; cf. also *Critias*, p. 111 E)—with a patriotic pride at which we may smile, but which nevertheless was quite justified—that Athena had selected ATTICA wherein to plant her chosen people, because she saw that the happy temperament of the seasons there would produce the wisest of men; men who, like herself, would be lovers both of war and of wisdom—i.e., would possess the sound mind in the sound body. And of Hellas itself we are told by Herodotus (iii. 106), who, as we know, was a great traveller, that, beyond all other countries in the world, it enjoyed the most happily-tempered seasons—an opinion endorsed by competent judges, such as Aristotle and Hippocrates.

There can, indeed, be little doubt that in ancient times the climate of Greece was much healthier than it is at present. The causes of this we shall see clearly as we proceed. Meantime, let us bear in mind that, while we accept the verdict of Herodotus on the country as a whole, Greece is a land of contrasts. To begin with, Northern Greece is divided, as regards general climatic and geological conditions, by the Pindus-range into two distinct halves. Further south, Parnassus may be regarded as the point of separation. The eastern coast opens freely to the sea, and is dry and sunny; whilst the western is rugged, inhospitable, and generally more moist.

Then again, if we picture to ourselves the multitudinous little districts into which the country is broken up, it will be evident that by no possibility could the climate be equable or uniform throughout. There are coast-lands, such as **Attica** and **Argolis**, where both heat and cold are agreeably tempered by the sea-breezes; Alpine-lands, such as **Western Arcadia**, **Ætolia**, and **Doris**, with all the varying conditions of mountain-regions; broad sunny plains, such as those of **Thessaly** and **Messenia**; and deep cauldron-shaped basins, such as are met with in **Eastern Arcadia** and **Bœotia**, into which the mild sea-winds that make the charm of the coast-lands and islands do not often penetrate.

As a consequence of this, in the different parts of the country, different seasons prevail at one and the same time. Thus, in Arcadia there may be deep winter-snows, whilst in Argolis and Laconia spring is unfolding in all its brightness, and in Messenia the sun is glowing already with summer heat. So much more severe, again, is the winter in Arcadia than in Laconia that Pausanias attributes the defeat of the Spartans—when on one occasion they had penetrated into Arcadia to make war on the men of Tegea—to the fact that they were not able to withstand the severity of an Arcadian snowstorm. Encumbered with their heavy armour and numbed by the cold, they were easily overcome (Paus., viii. 53, 10; cf. also Curtius, *Pel.*, i. pp. 52, 267). Yet Tegea lies but a little to the north of Laconia. We have also, on the authority of the historian Polybius, the often-quoted fact that the Arcadians practised



music, not only as an enjoyment, but as a necessity—a softening remedy—against the harsh influences of their climate.

Nevertheless, amidst all this diversity, the fact remains, that the climate of Hellas did tend to produce the “sound mind” in the “sound body.” Physically, the ancient Hellenes must have been a fine race. This is evident from the art-works which have come down to us. Where could Greek sculptors have found their ideals—the finely-cut profile and beautifully-proportioned figure which they modelled—save among the people? Even at the present day, these noble types are not extinct. They are to be met with still in the very districts which now groan under the worst climatic conditions, Bœotia and Arcadia.<sup>1</sup>

Of more importance still is the influence of the climate on the *intellectual* life of the Hellenes. Little as we are apt to think about it, climate, with all that it implies, plays a great part in the mental development of a people. In reflecting on the history of any nation, two factors must always be taken into account. These are (1) the race, the stock whence it has sprung, and (2) its physical surroundings—in other words, the ethno-graphy of the people and the geo-graphy of their land. Now, the Hellenes, as we have seen, sprang from the same great Aryan family to which we ourselves belong; but if we consider for a moment the subsequent history of the various branches of that family—the Indian, the Celtic, the Teutonic, &c.—we shall see that some other circumstance besides *race* determines the mental fibre of a people. The contrast between the contemplative inaction of the Indian Aryan, for instance, and the stirring energy of his Greek brother, would, as has often been pointed out (Polyb., iv. 20), be otherwise inexplicable. And this contrast is repeated in varying shades and degrees through all the different members of the Aryan family. No two nations have developed precisely in the same way—a fact which shews plainly that the influences which we class under the names of “climate,” “geographical position,” &c., are very potent in shaping the destiny of a people.

To guard against misapprehension, however, lest any one should imagine that we are disposed to overrate the importance of these physical surroundings, let us repeat here the weighty and oft-quoted words of Lassen on this very subject (*Indische Alterthümskunde*, i. p. 411; cf. also Humboldt, *Kosmos*, ii. p. 38). Speaking of the Aryans who crossed the Himalayas into India, he says: “It would be a great mistake to believe that physical influences—either alone or in greatest measure—determine the character of a people. India, like other countries, shews this clearly enough; the tribes of the Deccan and the Vindhya races were exposed to the same natural influences as the Aryans, but they never rose independently to a higher development. We must, therefore, recognise in the different nations a *groundwork of character—an original spiritual bent*—which may be developed and definitely helped or hindered by the exterior nature of the land, as well as by the events of history. This is the GENIUS OF THE NATIONS, breathed into them from the creation”—a genius, which, like that of the individual, may be modified by education and outward circumstance, but “*never can be given.*”

In our survey, then, we are considering physical conditions as influences which helped to mould the genius of the Hellenic people. And that such influences are, as stated above, exceedingly potent no student of history will

<sup>1</sup> Speaking of the people of Phigalia in Arcadia, Sir Thomas Wyse says: “Painters need not here recur to ancient types for authority. The tradition is existing, and the man and the costume still live” (*Excursion in the Peloponnesus*, ii. p. 25. Compare also Hermann Blümner, *Privat-Antiq.*, § 4).

deny. These very Hindu Aryans to whom Lassen justly attributes great intellectual ascendancy themselves succumbed in the end to the enervating influences of the climate. We cannot, therefore, consider it as the result of mere "chance" that the lot of the great experimenters of the world should have been cast in a land the climate of which was admirably calculated to spur them into energetic action. The *dolce far niente*, the possibility of taking life easily, which lay within the reach of the Hindu Aryan, was not possible to any of the Greek Aryans, except the Messenians, and their fate we shall learn presently.

"'Twill not be always summer, make you cabins!" growls old Father Hesiod (*Works and Days*, 503). He spoke to those who knew the severity of a Bœotian winter,<sup>1</sup> and "cabins" they accordingly made; the arts of construction flourished apace. "Work the works which the gods have marked out for men!" he says in another place (*Ibid.*, 397, 398), and there is not the slightest doubt that the keen blast of winter, the icy prick of mountain-winds, had its share in furthering this work, as well as the glorious brilliancy of the southern sunshine, or the invigorating breezes of the Ægean. Let us make no mistake here. When we come to investigate their history, we shall find that the earliest makers of Hellas were great workers. They worked themselves. Their kings and heroes worked, even their gods they represented as working, doing with their own hands what we should now call "menial tasks." Poseidon, the noble Earth-Shaker, unyokes the immortal horses of Father Zeus from the car; Hera, the goddess-queen, herself harnesses her steeds to the chariot; Athena, daughter of ægis-bearing Zeus, weaves with her own hands the splendid robe which she exchanges in time of war for the cuirass of the cloud-gatherer; it is Hephæstus, the glorious lame god, who builds the palaces wherein dwell the other immortals (*Iliad*, viii. 440; 381, 382, 384-386; i. 607).<sup>2</sup>

Then, if we descend to earth, we find the same scenes enacted among the great and noble: the sons of King Priam yoke the horses to their father's chariot; Odysseus, the man of many devices, chieftain of Ithaca, builds with his own hands the craft on which he sets sail from Calypso's isle—mark! it is not provided for him by the goddess—and his nuptial couch he makes for himself of olive wood; Nausicaä, the Phæacian princess, not only superintends the washing of the household linen, but apparently herself shares the toil, paddles in the running stream, and treads the garments with her little royal feet as merrily as any of her maidens; whilst her lady-mother, the queen, sits at home, and presides over the spinning of the women (*Iliad*, xxiv. 279; *Od.*, v. 243; xxiii. 190; vi. 85 *et seq.*, 52). So much for the testimony of Homer concerning the doings of the great folk in the days of chivalry.

As for Hesiod, the poet of the people—a better exponent than Homer of the opinions of the "masses"—great is his contempt for "do-nothings!" Non-workers are worthless creatures, "with whom both gods and men are wroth"—stingless drones, eating up the honey which others have amassed. "Work," he says emphatically, "is no disgrace, but sloth is a disgrace" (*Works and Days*, 303, 311).

Far from being ashamed of necessary labour, the real Makers of Hellas gloried in it. They lifted the burthen of toil—as in the Homeric Hymn the princesses of Eleusis bear off the shining pitchers, which they have filled at

<sup>1</sup> See the account of Thebes, *Hellas*, p. 15 *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> Even in Imperial times the conception of the gods as active powers had not entirely died out, for Pausanias mentions (viii. 32, 4) that he saw at Megalopolis a group of the so-called "Working-gods" (*Ergatai*): Athena Erganē, Mistress of Works; Apollo Agyieus, Way-god, guardian of highways and roads, &c. (see *Hellas*, pp. 120-129).



the fountain for "the dear house of their father—with a noble grace," exultingly (Homer, *Hymn to Demeter*, 170). One could see, the old singer implies, that they were princesses by the very way in which they poised the jars!<sup>1</sup>

And coming down to later times, we find the Work-spirit of old Father Hesiod the distinguishing characteristic of the Hellenes throughout all their best days. There is nothing that strikes a thoughtful observer more in the great ruins on the Acropolis of Athens than the extreme thoroughness of the workmanship. Even the parts not originally intended to be seen are found to be as truthfully and carefully wrought as the portions of the design which were meant to be conspicuous.

Hence we repeat again—the *Makers* of Hellas were great workers. When, at a later period, we find the Hellenes despising work—pluming themselves on the fact that they had no need to work, because there existed a body of inferior beings (slaves) expressly designed to relieve them from toil—we do not require a prophet to tell us that the *un-making* of Hellas was in progress. From a nation of Workers, her people had become, or were fast becoming, a nation of Talkers.

Our present inquiry, however, is concerned with happier times, and we can see that it was of the utmost consequence to the Hellenes, as Experimenters, that their climate should have been such as enabled them to delight in work for its own sake. We say advisedly to *delight* in work; for the Greek climate has another side as well as its sterner wintry aspect. We have dwelt specially on this, because it is undoubtedly that element which most assists in developing energy of character; but the softer element had its share, and a no less important share, in making the Hellenes what they became. Suppose that Hellas, with its little mountain-regions, had lain, say, in our own latitude, the energetic spurs to action, keen frosts and wintry winds, would have been present in abundance. But would these rough agents ever have succeeded in "stimulating" the people into that wondrously harmonious development which is characteristic of all their work? We venture to say that, making full allowance for the genius of the race, this question can only be answered in the negative. It is as much as we moderns living in northern regions can do—with all our present-day appliances for comfort—to obtain the mastery over our natural climatic conditions. How would this have been possible in the early ages of the world?

Fortunately for the world, Hellas does not lie amid the fogs and chill blasts of the Baltic and the North Sea, but in the warmer part of the temperate zone. The genial sunshine of the South was necessary to bring to maturity fruit so early developed as the Hellenic; and Hellas is emphatically a land of the sun.

The only part of the country in which a systematic study of the climate has been carried out as yet is Athens. The following table, however, giving the mean of a series of observations, made by Julius Schmidt (director of the Observatory), and extending over a period of twenty-four years, speaks volumes (Neumann u. Partsch, *op. cit.*, p. 24):—

Athens has—

Of clear days in the year, on which the sun is not hid for a moment	179
Bright days on which it is hid, perhaps, for half-an-hour	157
Cloudy days.	26
Days when the sun is not seen at all.	3

<sup>1</sup> For the story of the visit of the goddess Demeter to earth, and her acting as nurse at Eleusis in the family of Celeus, see *Hellas*, p. 258, *et seq.*

Three hundred and thirty-six days of almost unclouded sunshine! Contrast this with the meagre share which falls to our own lot in the pale north.<sup>1</sup> Contrast our mists and fogs and dull grey sky with the purity and transparency of the Attic air, the glowing blue of the Attic sky, and we shall cease to wonder at the early development of the genius of the race. In such a climate, under such conditions, the very burthens of life are lightened, its roughnesses are smoothed.

True, Attica is not Hellas, and no other part of the country possesses in an equal degree the climatic conditions which gave Attica the pre-eminence. Nevertheless, the fact remains that in every district of Hellas, without exception, the people could, as we have said, delight in work for its own sake. Their energies were neither lethargised by excessive heat, nor paralysed by excessive cold.<sup>2</sup> The climatic diversities of the little States are, however, best considered in connection with a subject to which they stand in close relation—viz., the soil.

### NATURAL RESOURCES AND SELF-HELP

"Yes!" says a reader, "climate is, of course, a weighty factor, but I should think that the fertility of the soil is even more important. Unless it were very fertile, and produced in abundance all that the people wanted, there would not be much leisure for experimenting."

Is "much leisure," then, a *sine quâ non* in experimenting? True it is, that some of the greatest discoveries of our own time have been made by those who might have passed their days in inglorious ease had they been so minded. But again we must reflect that we are speaking here of the race in general—not of individuals—and is it not the case that, as a rule, everything which requires an effort is pursued most vigorously amongst those who have *not* much leisure, who are dependent for the means of subsistence on their own exertions, either of body or of brain, whose wits are sharpened by dint of exercise and the pressure of necessity? If we examine into the history of Hellas, we shall find that precisely where the soil "produced in abundance all that the people wanted," there, "curiously enough," the experiments came to a sudden and untimely end.

To this we shall refer presently. Meantime, let us note one very significant fact, viz., that it was quite as much by what she withheld as by what she gave that Nature helped on "experimenting" in Hellas. This is evident from two considerations:—

(1) In this curious little country—more, perhaps, than in any other—Nature demands the co-operation of man. Like a saucy beauty, she will neither smile nor be gracious, until her caprices have been duly honoured. If we reflect for a moment on the immense variety of physical conditions which obtain in Greece, we shall see that a uniform fertility is just as far from possible as is a uniform climate. There are districts, such as Attica and Argolis, where a four-months' drought yearly prevails; there are others, such as Bœotia and Eastern Arcadia, where the inhabitants are well-nigh deluged with the

<sup>1</sup> The average number of sunny days in Germany (Breslau) is given by Professors Neumann and Partsch (*Phys. Geog. von Griechenland*, p. 24) as seventy-nine; of cloudy days as 286—seventy-nine days of sunshine against the 336 of Athens.

<sup>2</sup> Speaking of the Greeks as art-workers, Mr. Ruskin says: "Northern hands and eyes are, of course, never so subtle as Southern; and in very cold countries artistic execution is palsied" (*Queen of the Air*, p. 170).



watery element. Both phenomena will become very clear to us when we have inquired into their causes. Meantime, we can see that in neither case could Nature do much for man, until man had bestirred himself and paved the way for her operations. When man had done this—when the Athenians had devised that system of irrigation whereby the waters of the Cephissus were brought to their olive-groves and gardens; when the Argives had become adepts in the art of well-digging; when the Arcadians had found out how to regulate their floods by means of canals and dams—then indeed Nature deigned to smile upon their efforts. It may be safely affirmed that no climate in Europe so richly rewards labour bestowed upon the soil as does that of Greece, but the necessary conditions in every case must first be fulfilled. It is the neglect of these conditions—a neglect brought about by long ages of suffering and misrule—that brought Greece into the deplorable state from which she is even now but slowly emerging (see *Appendix to this Section*). Nothing is wanting, however, except the old care and skill, to make the country what it was in antiquity. The healing, restoring, revivifying powers of the climate of Greece, where man works with the climate, are described as little short of miraculous.

To return, however, to the first Hellenes. Can we not see how admirably fitted was this state of things to call forth the best powers, the assiduity, the ingenuity, of each race? The Hellene knew that Nature could do little without his co-operation; but he also knew that, if he did his part, Nature would do hers. He could therefore work on with the sure hope of success—a success not always granted to the children of more northerly climes.

(2) Where “experimenting” of all sorts went on with most vigour was in districts such as Attica and Corinth, where the soil is poor and thin. In Attica earth is so precious a commodity, that in ancient times, when land was leased out, a clause in the contract prohibited the farmer from carrying any of the soil away (*C. I. Gr.*, i. p. 93). Here as in Peloponnesus (where the proportion of hill to level ground is nearly as 9 to 10) (*Curtius, Pel.*, i. p. 22), the terraced sides of the mountains bear witness to the indefatigable diligence of the inhabitants. Not the most unwearied efforts, however, could induce Mother Earth to yield enough for the wants of an ever-increasing population, and consequently both Athenians and Corinthians were forced to look elsewhere for the means of subsistence. The Athenians discovered the advantages of their position as dwellers on the southern foreland of Northern Greece, facing the Isles and Asia; the Corinthians discovered the amazing benefits which might be derived from their double sea. Who would waste time “picking stones out of an ungrateful soil” when such possibilities lay before him? Surely no one with a head upon his shoulders! And so, the Corinthians set to work to develop their fleet; they sent out colonies to the Ambracian Gulf, to Coreyra (Corfu), to Sicily and Thrace; they were in the forefront of all material and artistic progress, and as a consequence their “stony” city became the wealthiest in Hellas (*ibid.*, ii. p. 516 *et seq.*). All the grain-markets of the East were at their service. The Athenians likewise set to work to develop their fleet and their seamanship, and well was it for Hellas that they did so. For in that last desperate struggle with the Persian, it was Athenian courage, and Athenian seamanship, and Athenian knowledge of winds and currents, that gained the day, and led the Barbarian in the Bay of Salamis into the very ruin which he had planned for others. The Athenians were not a whit behind the Corinthians in the march of material and artistic progress. They led the van in all things intellectual, and in a yet nobler cause—the cause of Freedom and of the Fatherland.

Such is the history of two of the poorest and least fertile lands of Greece. Now let us turn to the richly-endowed lands, the lands which produced all that heart could desire, and so "gave leisure" for experimenting. Of such rich and fertile countries, Greece can boast three—Thessaly, Bœotia, and Messenia. What does history tell us concerning *their* achievements? The chronicle is by no means a brilliant one. **Thessaly**, with her fat pastures and fertile plains, proved a good nursing-mother to many of the races of Hellas in their infancy; but, this accomplished, Thessaly folded her hands and considered her part done. In historic times, her fat pastures sent forth neither heroes, nor patriots, nor artists, nor men of letters. **Bœotia** certainly numbered many brave and distinguished men among her sons, therefore any inference in respect to her must be cautiously drawn. Nevertheless, there can be little doubt that, as regards the mass of the people, the epithets lavished on them by their polite Athenian neighbours, "Bœotian pigs," "Bœotian swine," were only too well deserved, and called out by Bœotian sensuality and sloth. The history of **Messenia**, again, is sadder than that of any other Hellenic State. The richest and most beautiful land of Greece, "watered by innumerable streams," as Euripides describes it (*Strabo*, p. 366), abounding in corn, wine, and oil, ripened under sunny skies, with rich pasture-ground for flocks and herds—Messenia was yet the most unfortunate of all. The Messenians, and the Messenians alone of all the nobler peoples of Hellas, failed in working out their grand destiny. The Dorian nature itself, stern, energetic, practical, was not proof against the seductive influences of an enervating climate and rich soil. Very early the Messenian Dorians displayed their want of "backbone," their incapacity for self-defence, and fell a prey to their stronger brethren, the Spartans, who, on the colder, less fertile side of Taygetus, had coveted their sunny plains. The Messenians, too, were Hellenes, and protested against their chains. They, too, went into exile rather than submit to the oppressor; but even when led back in triumph by Epaminondas and reinstated in their rights, the old fatal effect of the climate became visible again. Weak and undecided in character, the Messenians brought no blessing on Peloponnesus; rather, by relying on outward assistance and alliance with Macedonia, did they hasten the downfall of Hellas.<sup>1</sup>

From these instances it will be seen that, in the great work, fertility and natural wealth proved to be a hindrance rather than a help. As to the rest, it will also be seen that Hellas, as stated before, is a land of contrasts. In no way can this be better studied than by a comparison of two of the examples just cited, the neighbouring states of Bœotia and Attica. Side by side they stood with only the mountains intervening. On the one hand was Bœotia, true to its name, *Land of Oxen*, with its hollow basins and humid valleys, its teeming fertility and depressing vapours, its grey-and-black marbled cities. On the other was Attica, true also to its name, *the Wave-broken* (i.e. coast-land), with its barren, thyme-covered, rocky hills, its light soil, its pure bracing atmos-

<sup>1</sup> The above remarks, based on a remarkable passage in the *Peloponnesos* of E. Curtius (ii. p. 123 *et seq.*), seem at first sight to bear rather hardly upon the Messenians, who made a noble stand, from first to last, against the Spartans. But in no other way except on the theory of a "deterioration of fibre" under a semi-tropical sun can we account for the failure of the Dorians in Messenia. In Laconia, in Argos, in Corinth, in Phlius, they held their own sturdily. The same difference in physique and temperament has been observed in our own day between the peaceable planter of Kalamata and the fierce Mainote of the rugged Taygetus peninsula.

For an equally remarkable example of a contrary influence, that of a sunless, cheerless climate, and its effect on the same Dorian race, see the sketch of the Dorian migration given a few sections further on.



phere, its deep blue sky, its "violet-crowned" city, dazzling in the brilliant whiteness of her marble edifices. It seemed as though some higher power had intervened to restore the balance destroyed by the favouritism of Mother Earth. Parnes, like a wall, divides the two States; but, as has been well said (Bishop C. Wordsworth, *Greece*, p. 150), Bœotia is on the northern, cheerless side, intellectually; Attica on the southern, rejoicing and glorying in a sunshine under whose influence all that was bright and beautiful in the world of genius came to maturity. Not without a struggle on the part of her inhabitants, however. The very efforts which they were forced to make to obtain from and by the sea the supplies denied them by the land, saved them from sinking into the inglorious ease of their wealthy Bœotian neighbours.

It will be evident, then, from the foregoing that although, on the whole, ancient Hellas in many respects is accurately described as a land "not less rich than beautiful," a land whose "waters and forests teemed with life" (Thirlwall, *Hist. of Greece*, i. p. 31), it is nevertheless equally true to say that poverty was at home in many parts of it. The Hellenes had a proverb: "Hunger is a teacher of many things," and certainly it was "necessity" that suggested not a few of their experiments: their navigation, commerce, colonisation, were, as we have seen, in great part due to that stern but kindly Mother. "In Hellas," said Demaratus, the exiled Spartan king to Xerxes, "Want is our foster-brother, dwelling ever with us; but," he adds, "Valour is an ally whom we have gained by wisdom and strict laws" (Herodotus, vii. 102). In Sparta at least, then, Want and Valour went hand in hand. Those who have but little will struggle to keep that little.

This reminds us of the story, also told by Herodotus, concerning the men of Andros (viii. 111, 121). They, like most of the Islanders, had submitted voluntarily to the Persian; hence, immediately after the battle of Salamis, Themistocles levied upon them a money-fine. This they declined to pay, giving as an excuse that their island was troubled by two unprofitable gods, whom they could by no means get rid of—Poverty and Helplessness. Therefore, they said, they could not pay the sum demanded. Themistocles proceeded forthwith to besiege their city; but the men of Andros knew so well how to defend themselves, that he was compelled finally to sail away without the expected contribution.

Although we may not admire the unpatriotic conduct of the Andrians, it is quite clear that the dominant influences of the island were not Poverty and Helplessness, but the same that were at home in many other parts of Hellas—NECESSITY and SELF-HELP.

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Turning now from the negative to the positive aspect of the matter—from what Hellas did *not* to what she did afford—we ask: "How did the little country, then, nourish her children? What tools did she provide for her workmen?" Perhaps this, of all questions, is the one that most closely concerns a primitive race. In ancient times the connection between land and people was far more intimate than in our own day. Think only of the matter of food-supply. *Now*, the whole of the habitable globe is, practically, as one country; the failure of the harvest in any particular part is speedily remedied by the abundance of another. In the earliest times, failure of the harvest too often meant—starvation. We moderns can only realise to ourselves the position of a primitive race by comparing it with that of castaways on some desert island. True, the Aryan of 3000 or 4000 years ago was a being very different in some respects from his brother of the present century—from the

"castaway" point of view, a much more capable and independent being. Nevertheless, the prime wants of both are the same—food, shelter, clothing, the raw materials of all the adjuncts of a life above that of the animals. It must, consequently, have been in a very Robinson-Crusoe-like spirit that the primitive Hellenes surveyed the land in which they found themselves, and by dint of testing and experimenting, gradually appropriated all that could be made to minister to their wants.

They would be forced to begin with the forests, for although we hold that the Aryans were not the first settlers in Greece—that races on a lower stage of civilisation had preceded them,<sup>1</sup> and cleared the land here and there—yet the real works of improvement, the draining of the swamps, opening up of roads, &c., doubtless awaited Aryan intelligence and Aryan energy. Forests they would find in abundance, for in the earliest times the slopes of the Greek mountains must have been clothed with well-nigh impenetrable woods. On the eastern side of Greece these had disappeared in certain districts, such as Attica, to a great extent in historic times; but on the western side, where, as we have seen (p. 20), the climate is moister, some parts of Acarnania afford even in our own day an idea of primitive Greece as it must have presented itself to the eyes of the first Hellenes. "Everywhere," writes M. Heuzey of Acarnania in 1856, "everywhere we find forests, everywhere flowing water, everywhere a soil embarrassed at once by woods, by ravines, by mountains" (*Le Mont Olympe et l'Acarnanie*, p. 223).

Were we to describe at length all that the Greeks found in their forests and valleys, or all that by experimenting they introduced into the land, this part of our subject would require a volume to itself, for Greece possesses a rich and most varied flora. The utmost that we can attempt here, therefore, is to notice briefly those natural productions which were of value as food, or of practical utility to them otherwise, or which, as the myths shew us, had forcibly struck their imagination.

Of all the trees that clothe the mountains of Greece, first in the category of usefulness must be placed the Coniferæ—trees which grow well in a warm, sandy soil. Without their pines and firs—light wood, easily cut down with rude tools of stone or of bronze, and easily transported—Greek navigation could not have developed so early as it did. Strange to say, the Greeks, great sailors as they were, had few ships of oak. Oak-trees they had in plenty; but, in the first place, oak-wood is hard to fell and work, and in the second, the Greeks had a prejudice (like all their prejudices, not without a touch of plausibility) to the effect that resinous wood resisted better than any other the action of sea-water. Hence, when they used oak-wood, it was mainly, as Theophrastus tells us, in the construction of light boats used on rivers and lakes; if used for sea-going ships, they thought it would decay in the salt water. This mistake, however, cost them not a little; for their vessels of war, constructed at great expense, had no durability, and soon became unfit for service (*Hist. plant.*, v. 4, 3; *cf.*, Neumann u. Partsch, *op. cit.*, p. 371). Of the trees mentioned by Homer as cut down for shipbuilding purposes—the oak, the white poplar, and the pine (*Iliad*, xiii. 389; xvi. 482)—the last was by far the most used. Probably the common strand-pine (*Pinus halepensis*), which grows on the Isthmus, in Attica, and elsewhere, was employed at first; later, the Apollo-pine (*Abies Apollinis*),<sup>2</sup> which is found everywhere in Greece, and

<sup>1</sup> See the quotation from Professor Max Müller on p. 46 of *Hellas*.

<sup>2</sup> The Apollo-pine, according to v. Heldreich, is probably the *claté* of the ancients—the tree now called *mbrét*, "the king," by the Albanians. It is, however, difficult to distinguish precisely what species are indicated by the old writers. Thus *peuke* = "the fir," and *pitys* = "the pine,"



itself, with its tall slim stem, seems to suggest the idea of a mast (*Od.*, ii. 424). But not only was the pine-tree employed for shipbuilding. It served for constructive purposes of all sorts—for houses and furniture, for bridges, chariots, oil-presses, casks; pine and fir alike yielded resin, pitch, and tar; from both, torches were made; in later days fir-cones were steeped in wine to prevent it souring; and finally, the kernels contained in the large cones of one species of pine were eaten as fruit, and ranked, even in historic times, amongst delicacies such as almonds and walnuts (Hugo Blümner: *Technologie und Terminologie der Gewerbe und Künste bei Griechen und Römern*, ii, 283, 285; Neumann u. Partsch, *op. cit.*, p. 365 *et seq.*).

Who can wonder that the early Hellene—perforce his own boat-builder, house-builder, and carpenter—loved the fir-tree, with her fragrance, her manifold uses, her light- and heat-giving properties? That he dedicated her to Poseidon, god of the waves over which his little bark bore him, and crowned with her feathery foliage the victor in the Isthmian Games? Who can wonder that the slender, graceful pine-tree appealed even more forcibly to his imagination, that when wintry blasts played havoc in the pine-woods, he lamented over his favourite, and told of the untimely fate of poor Pitys, struck down by her jealous suitor, rude Boreas, the North-wind.<sup>1</sup>

More conspicuous than the pine among the forest trees of Greece, however, is the Oak. According to von Heldreich (*op. cit.*, p. 15 *et seq.*), Hellas possesses no fewer than ten species of oak, many of which are evergreen, forming woods of incomparable beauty, even in winter. Chief of all the varieties is the Valonian oak (*Quercus ægilops*), a magnificent tree with spreading branches, almost an evergreen, which grows everywhere, but is seen to greatest perfection in Acarnania, where it clothes the plains and the sides of the hills, bearing large acorns, which are sweeter than those of any other sort, and now form (for tanning purposes) one of the most important articles of export in Greece. This variety is probably the *phegos* of the ancients,<sup>2</sup> and it was also valued in early days—not so much, however, on account of its timber, as for other reasons. The oak, with its majestic proportions, the Greeks dedicated to Zeus—king of trees to the king of gods—and they regarded it as a special gift of the gods to men, but why? Because, as Hesiod tells us (*Works and Days*, 232), it bears “acorns on its summit, and bees in its middle”—that is, honey stored up by the wild bees in its hollow. With the uses of honey to a people who possessed no sugar we are all familiar. The Aryans made from it their *met* or mead—a kind of sweet intoxicating drink.<sup>3</sup> To picture the primitive Hellenes as acorn-eaters is, however, apparently repugnant to some modern writers, and accordingly attempts have been made of late to show that the edible “acorns” of the ancient Greeks were the fruit, not of the oak, but of the chestnut. But what are the facts? Simply (1) that the Hellenes knew the fruit of the chestnut (which they called *Dios balanos* = “Zeus’ acorn”) before

are used interchangeably; and Theophrastus says expressly that what was elsewhere called *peuke*, the Arcadians called *pitys*. Both names are forms of the same word, and mean “pitch-tree,” tree full of resin. (Von Heldreich, *Die Nutzpflanzen Griechenlands*, p. 13; Theophr., iii., 9, 4; V. Hehn, *Kulturpflanzen und Haustiere in ihrem Uebergang aus Asien*, p. 259, 3rd ed.)

<sup>1</sup> For the myth, see *Hellas*, p. 249.

<sup>2</sup> *Phegos* is a name which has caused difficulty through its being confounded with the Latin *fagus*, “beech.” The Greek name for the beech is, however, different (*oxya*). Most botanists consider *phegos* as = “oak with edible acorns.” The general name for the oak is *dryjs*; but this term is used to include, not only any timber-tree, but even trees like the olive. Taken in a special sense, *dryjs* = “oak which sheds its leaves,” *prinos* = “evergreen oak” (Neumann u. Partsch, *op. cit.*, p. 381).

<sup>3</sup> See *Hellas*, p. 50.

they knew the tree itself, from which it is inferred that the latter was not indigenous to Greece, but transplanted from its home in Asia Minor at a later date; and (2) that the Arcadian and Acarnanian Greeks of the present century still eat acorns—roasted or even uncooked—facts vouched for by v. Heldreich, Fraas, and Heuzey (Hehn, *op. cit.*, p. 341 *et seq.*; v. Heldreich, *op. cit.*, p. 16; Heuzey, *op. cit.* p. 239). We may therefore be tolerably sure that in a country like Greece, although acorns served in good years as food for the swine, yet that when the harvest failed—and also before the Greek Aryans had attained to proficiency in the tilling of the soil—acorns were by no means a despised food for human beings. Hesiod, indeed, says expressly, in the passage just quoted, that the gods gave them as a special blessing to the just, and Plato emphasises this still further (*Repub.*, ii. 363).

In later times other species of oak were prized for the qualities which made them esteemed now. Thus, the ilex (*prinos* or evergreen oak) was valued for its hardness, and to it the Greeks applied their equivalent of our phrase, "hearts of oak"—*andres prininon*—"men steadfast, to be relied upon." Of its wood they made the keels of their triremes—*i.e.* that part which, in dragging up the vessel on dry land, was most exposed to friction, a process which the soft pine-wood could not resist. They found out also that oak-wood does not decay in earth, and consequently used it for posts and beams. Finally, gall-nuts and the red dye obtained from the Kermes variety (*Quercus coccifera*) were known in antiquity, as was also the cork-oak of Arcadia (of which Pausanias tells us), with its thin light bark, which was used for the floats of anchors and nets. Thus by degrees, by experiment after experiment, were the different properties of the bounties of Nature discovered and turned to account (Theophr., v. 7. 2; Paus., viii. 12. 1; Blümner, *op. cit.*, p. 261; Neumann u. Partsch, *op. cit.*, pp. 371–382).

In addition to the pine and the oak as forest-forming timber-trees, the Greeks had (although more partially) the red beech, which grows on Olympus and Pindus and in Ætolia. On their hillsides and in their mountain-glens, they had the ash, the haunt of the Melian Nymphs, from which in the earliest days the shafts of spears were made;<sup>1</sup> the elm, the linden, the fragrant juniper (dedicated to Apollo<sup>2</sup>), of which there are at least ten species, varying in size from a shrub to a tree; while beside streams grew the willow, the alder, and the silver poplar—the last, to the child-like Hellene, the embodiment, with its glancing leaves, of the brilliant Heliadæ, the transformed daughters of the sun.<sup>3</sup> Finally, in marshy places were found the homely reeds and rushes, used for basket-making and mats; and most important of all, by the Copaic Lake in Bœotia, grew the *donax*, or flute-reed, which helped so greatly in the development of music among the people. Probably the Hellenes possessed all these and more from the first. Therefore, with the means of providing shelter against the arrows of the frost and the rain, and for transporting themselves from place to place, with the materials for huts, furniture, boats, fuel, and light, they were amply supplied.

<sup>1</sup> For the legend of the Melian Nymphs, see *Hellas*, p. 82.

<sup>2</sup> For the myth, see *Hellas*, p. 137.

<sup>3</sup> For the story of the transformation of the grief-stricken Heliadæ, see the myth of Phæthon, *Hellas*, p. 190. The white poplar was a tree of mourning, and as such it is appropriately placed by Homer around the dismal dwelling of Hades, together with the willows that cast their fruit before their season. Its leaves, however, formed the wreath worn by athletes, because the tree, although originally dedicated to Hades, became sacred to Heracles (Hercules), as a symbol of the victory which the hero gained over the powers of the lower world when he brought up to earth Cerberus, the terrible watch-dog of the abode of the dead (C. Boetticher, *Der Baumcultus der Hellenen*, p. 441 *et seq.*).



Then, as to clothing. How must we imagine the primitive Hellenes to have been attired? In very much the same manner as the primitive Aryans—that is, in sheep- and goat-skins,<sup>1</sup> a fashion, as we know, followed by the Ozolian Locrians in historic times, to the disgust of their more fastidious and polished brethren. The warriors and heroes of each clan would probably appear in the trophies of their prowess—the skins of wolves and of bears—as did the Arcadians when, on one occasion, they came to the help of the Messenians, grim and fierce, armed with their hunting-spears. The wealthy men, “the men of many cows,”<sup>2</sup> would doubtless indulge in the shapeless coats of felt, which seem to have been the first stage in the tailor’s art. These, again, would give place in time to the woollen garments, which, gradually advancing in fineness with the proficiency of the women in weaving, formed at all times the favourite garb of the Hellenes. Flax was cultivated in Greece, and that linen was worn in early days by men as well as women is evident from the linen corslet of Ajax Oileus. Later, however, linen apparel, as clothing for men, did not find so much favour with the European Greeks as among their Asiatic brethren.

Finally, as to food. This probably consisted at first with the primitive Hellenes, as with their Aryan forefathers, of what Nature offered—the products of the chase, the milk of their flocks and herds, acorns and wild fruits. Of the latter, Greece now offers a great variety: raspberries, found on Olympus; gooseberries, in the forest-zone of lesser heights; barberries; the cornelian cherry, with its pleasantly acid fruit; and the berries of the Judas-thorn (*Zizyphus vulgaris*), which are uncommonly sweet, and somewhat resemble little olives in appearance (Neumann u. Partsch, *op. cit.*, p. 400). However, as the small thorny shrubs peculiar to the dry hillsides and heaths, the Xerovuni of Greece, have increased in proportion to the destruction of the forests, it is doubtful whether the primitive Hellenes possessed all these desirable additions to their meagre fare. Three fruits they certainly knew—the blackberry, the arbutus (which Varro reckons among the means of nourishment of primitive man), and the pear. The wild pear-tree is very plentiful in Greece, and in Peloponnesus so much so that this part of the country is supposed by some writers to have received the name of *Apia* from its abundance.<sup>3</sup> Apple trees are rare, and met with only in the north. The climate, however, is too dry for these two fruits, neither of which came to perfection or was of importance to the later Greeks.

To complete the tale of the natural bounties of Greece, however, we must not omit to add the wild herbs, those which fill the air with aromatic fragrance, as thyme and mint, and those which figure so largely as salads, &c., in the present dietary of the people. Without these humble friends, the long fasts of the Greek Church, rigidly observed by the lower classes in Greece, would be impossible. Von Heldreich gives several lists of these plants, which are very

<sup>1</sup> See *Hellas*, p. 50.

<sup>2</sup> *Polyboutes*. See the note on primitive survivals in early Greece, *Hellas*, p. 49.

<sup>3</sup> From *apios*, “a pear-tree.” The name *Apia*, or the Apian land—used for Peloponnesus by the tragedians—the Greeks traced to Apis, the son of Phoroneus, an old king of Argos or Sicyon. It is now supposed to mean the Watery Land, in the sense of land surrounded by water. So Curtius identifies *Apia* with the Sanscrit *ap = aqua = “water”* (*Grundzüge*, p. 463). It must not be confounded with Homer’s *apiês gairês* (*Il.*, i. 270; iii. 49), which simply means “the far-off land.” It is probable that the three chief names, ancient and modern, for Peloponnesus refer to its situation as surrounded with water—Peloponnesus = “Pelops’ Island”; *Apia* = “watery land”; *Morea* = “sea land” (see *Hellas*, p. 24). At the same time, the derivation of *Apia* from *apios*, “the pear-tree,” is not worthless. It has its root, as we have seen, in another physical fact, for which any traveller can vouch.

numerous, and the collecting of which in the woods and on the hillsides, now forms one of the chief occupations of the women and girls of Greece. In antiquity, wild herbs, doubtless played as great a part amongst the poorer classes as at present, although they would seem not to have been to the taste of the rich. "Fools!" says Hesiod (*Works and Days*, 40-41) of his "gift-devouring" kings, "Neither do they know how much more the half is than the whole, nor yet what great refreshment there is in a diet of marsh mallows and squills."<sup>1</sup>

Mallows and squills! truly, it must have required the philosophic spirit to live contentedly on such fare. If Hesiod had any practical experience of it, this may help to account for the acerbity of temper apparent in the old poet at times, despite his philosophising. We may be tolerably sure that if the primitive Hellenes were often reduced to such a diet, it must have acted as a goad and a spur to their zeal in the prosecution of agriculture and of the peaceful arts, whereby they might raise themselves above the shifts and emergencies of a hand-to-mouth life.

"Halt, for a moment, pray!" cries a bewildered reader. "What an extraordinary picture you are drawing! Surely there must be some mistake. What about the delicious fruits which Homer knew—the pomegranates, the sweet figs, the olives in their bloom, that tantalised Tantalus in the lower regions?"<sup>2</sup> Acorns and pine-nuts, marsh mallows and squills, forsooth!—your Hellenes might after all just as well have settled round the Baltic!"

Hardly! for in that case they would have been obliged to wait longer for their delicious fruits. These appeared in Hellas in due time; but, as the result of "experimenting." No one, we think, will venture to doubt this after the exhaustive researches of Victor Hehn. All the finer fruits of the Hellenes, which thrive so "naturally" beneath the sunny skies of Greece as to be taken for veritable children of the soil, were in reality either "ennobled" by the process of grafting Eastern varieties on Greek stocks, or were introduced directly from the East.<sup>3</sup>

We are as yet, however, very far from the fruit-age. The nomad-stage must first be followed in the march of civilisation by the purely agricultural stage, for horticulture pre-supposes a state of society altogether different from that which obtains under primitive conditions. Even the beginnings of agriculture must have been attended with great difficulties—not only because of the dislike of the hunter or the shepherd to give up the life to which he had been accustomed and settle down to what, in his eyes, is monotonous drudgery, but for other reasons. To a nomad race land is common property; no one

<sup>1</sup> *Asphodelos* = "the squill," the plant transferred by Homer to his lower world. From its soft name we are apt to imagine the asphodel-meadows which surround the House of Hades as an element of beauty in the picture. Far from this, they form the most appropriate of backgrounds to that most dismal of regions—the Land of Shadows (see the description of the plant in the section on the lower world, *Hellas*, pp. 282-83).

<sup>2</sup> For the myth, see *Hellas*, p. 284.

<sup>3</sup> Hehn takes as the motto for his remarkable work "*Kulturpflanzen und Hausthiere in ihrem Uebergang aus Asien nach Griechenland und Italien*" (which has been so well translated into English by J. S. Stallybrass, under the title of *The Wanderings of Plants and Animals from their First Home*), the apophthegm of Schelling: "What is Europe but the stem, unfruitful in itself, on which everything must first be grafted, and which only thereby can be ennobled?" and in this spirit his researches are pursued. To protest against any conclusions based on a learning so wide and varied as that of Hehn were a bold proceeding. Nevertheless, when e.g. he represents the *pine* (*op. cit.*, p. 262) as a foreigner on Greek soil, one is disposed to think that his theory is pushed too far. Prof. Grisebach (*Vegetation der Erde*, i. pp. 313, 319) recognises, as native to the Mediterranean zone, eighteen species of Coniferæ, of which eleven belong to the genus *Pinus* taken in the wide sense.



will take the trouble incurred in ploughing and sowing until there is a chance of his being permitted to enjoy the fruits of his toil in peace. The systematic tilling of the ground, therefore, implies a recognition of property in land, and much that this involves. Hence we find the introduction of agriculture into Greece associated in the myths with the first ideas of *Law*. Demeter, Earth-mother, the giver of the first precious seed-corn, is also Thesmophoros, the giver of the first laws.<sup>1</sup>

These beginnings of agriculture, however, had, as is believed, been made by the Aryans before the Dispersion,<sup>2</sup> and the Græco-Aryans probably brought with them to their new home both wheat and barley. The former thrived only in certain parts of Greece, where there is a rich clay soil, as in the plain of Eleusis in Attica (here agriculture was supposed to have originated), and in Thessaly, Bœotia, Messenia, Laconia, and Argolis. Barley, however, will grow anywhere, and barley-cakes accordingly formed the staple food of the majority of the Greeks, even in historic times. Wheaten bread was a dainty, reserved for high days and holidays.

The third stage, the era of fruit-growing, seems to have been reached in Homer's time, for Diomedes, in speaking of his father's possessions in Argos, mentions not only wheatfields (stage ii.) and sheep (stage i.), but also orchards of trees (*Iliad*, xiv. 22).

It is evident that here we have reached a stage of civilisation when the rights of the proprietor are fully recognised, and when, moreover, the country generally is peaceful and settled (Hehn, *op. cit.*, p. 104 *et seq.*). The tiller of the fields looks for his harvest within a few months; the planter of trees must wait years for a result (the olive, *e.g.*, only begins to yield regularly in its sixteenth year, and only in its 40-60th year is in the fulness of its strength), and in early days, must be prepared to see his labour undone by an invading army, or some wild marauding horde. In a country like Greece, moreover, the horticulturist must have experienced peculiar difficulties. The regulation of the water-supply, for instance, was at all times a fertile source of dispute, and any one attempting to draw off a portion of the precious element from the local stream by a canal for his own private use would be denounced as a traitor to the common weal. In any age of the world, again, there are never wanting those who set themselves against a new order of things, and we can easily understand how the introduction of fruit-growing would be opposed by the upholders of "things as they are," how the patriotic argument would be trotted out: "*We*, who own nothing but our flocks and herds, are ready to march at a day's notice rather than submit to a disgraceful peace, these men, who are constructing canals and planting trees, are binding so many fetters on the land. To preserve their property they will make any terms with the enemy, and drag us all into slavery. What sufficed for our fathers ought to suffice for us." And so on, arguments which recur again and again, under ever new faces, in every land, at every improvement-making epoch.

The fruit-growing stage in Greece, however, accompanied by all sorts of experiments in planting, grafting, and irrigation arrived, and with it the Three Sisters that henceforth played so important a part in the economy of Hellas, the olive, the fig-tree, and the vine.

The nations of Europe have been divided respectively into "beer-and-butter" and "wine-and-oil" consuming peoples. The Greeks belong to the latter class, and from first to last the olive was their most highly prized possession. It

<sup>1</sup> Consult the article "Demeter," *Hellas*, p. 256 *et seq.* For the myth of Triptolemus, and the distribution by him of the seed-corn, see *Hellas*, p. 274.

<sup>2</sup> See *Hellas*, p. 48.

grows wild throughout Greece; but, according to Hehn, the cultivated variety was introduced first from the East (*op. cit.*, pp. 88 *et seq.*). If this be a fact, it speaks wonders for the horticultural experiments of the Greeks at a very early age indeed; since there is evidence in the oil-presses found in the prehistoric remains on the island of Therasia, that the inhabitants of the village knew the olive—the fruit and its uses.<sup>1</sup> The date of the volcanic outbursts that buried the primitive community of Therasia is fixed by geologists about 2000 B.C., and in any case, it must be placed very early. Hence, on Hehn's theory, intercourse with the East, and ennobling of the native species, must have been well advanced at this epoch.

However this may have been, at the present day as in early times the wild kinds abound in the land. No place is too dry, no soil too ungrateful for the wild olive (*kotinos*), it is the veritable child of Greece. In the plains and mountain-gorges, on the hillsides, it is to be found by millions (von Heldreich, *op. cit.*, p. 30). As the population increases, these wild plants are utilised by grafting, as they were to a certain extent in the olden time. Especially did the olive thrive in Attica; it loves sea-air and a light chalk soil, and both conditions are found there. With his barley-loaf, a handful of olives, and a draught of plentifully-diluted wine, the poor Athenian was as happy as a king. He wanted nothing more, the climate made him independent. The olive was the tree *par excellence* of the Athenians, and even now the groves of hoary patriarchs, some of which may have seen Athens in her beauty,<sup>2</sup> testify to the love of the people for their "best of all trees." Naught knew they of its foreign birth. It was the special gift, so they thought, of their patron-deity, Athena. In the legendary contest with Poseidon for the possession of Attica, when it had been decided that the land should fall to the producer of the most useful gift, Athena, so the story ran, struck her spear into a cleft of the Acropolis rock, and forthwith there sprang up the first olive-tree. Or, better still, according to another version, the spear itself became metamorphosed into an olive-tree, the emblem of War was transformed into the symbol of Peace. From this first-raised olive on the Acropolis a shoot was taken, and planted on the spot afterwards known as the Academy, the scene of Plato's teaching; and from this, again, were descended the twelve famous Olive-trees sacred to Zeus Morios and Athena Moria (guardians of the propagated olives), which yielded the olive-wreaths and fine oil that formed the prizes of the victors in the Panathenaic contests. So sacred were these propagated olive-trees, parents of all the olive-groves of Attica, that if any one did but touch them, he fell under the ban of the State. Any slave seeing and reporting such an occurrence forthwith received his freedom. Thus, the olive-culture, supposed to have emanated from the Acropolis, remained under the control of the State. How important it became for Attica is well seen from the fact that, by the old Laws of Solon, no olive-tree might be dug up except for the purposes of some public festival, and even private proprietors were prohibited from removing more than two in any one year, except on the occasion of a death in the family (*Lysias*, vii. (*peri sékou*); Demosth. in Macart. (43), 71; Böckh, *Staatshaushalt. der Athener*, i. pp. 54, 421, 3rd ed.).

The olive was associated with well-nigh every act of Athenian life; an olive-wreath on the door of a house announced that a child was born into the world; with olive-leaves the babe was surrounded and blessed in his cradle; with olive-oil the athlete made his limbs supple for contest and for war; with a

<sup>1</sup> For a description of this prehistoric Pompeii, see *Hellas*, p. 64.

<sup>2</sup> According to v. Heldreich, some of the olive-trees of Athens must be at least 1500 years old (Schliemann, *Orchomenos*, p. 1).



wool-entwined olive-branch the suppliant approached the altar or the conqueror ; on olive-leaves, finally, both suppliant and conqueror were laid for the last long sleep.

Thus the olive, with all its varied applications—its wondrous vitality and power of renewing its growth from its own roots, its hard, durable wood, its sustaining fruit, its pure oil, emblem of light and understanding—became to the Hellenes the symbol of culture, civilisation, progress, peace, and its leaves formed the crown of the victor in the national contests at Olympia, contests during which, as we have already seen, hostilities ceased, and the truce of the Olympian Zeus prevailed throughout Hellas (C. Bötticher, *op. cit.*, p. 423, *et seq.*).<sup>1</sup>

The alien origin of the fig-tree and the vine we are not concerned to dispute. The home of the former was probably Syria or Palestine ; the latter grows wild in Thrace, whither it may have been brought from Asia Minor. Both fruits certainly took very kindly to their foster-land, and both, as is evident from the myths, must have been introduced at a tolerably early date.<sup>2</sup>

The Athenians believed that the fig-tree was indigenous to their land. The wild fig, *erineos*, is common throughout Greece, picturesquely springing from the crevices of the rocks, and it figures in the myths ; but its fruit is worthless. The cultivated fig was supposed to have been the special gift of Demeter to the hero Phytalus, who had shewn the goddess hospitality ; the name *Phytalus*, however, which means simply “ planter,” betrays the origin of the story.

Although of immense importance in a country like Attica, the fig-tree was, nevertheless, overshadowed there by its sister, the vine. This, too, according to the Sagas, was native to Ætolia and Attica, and a gift of a god to these districts. Undoubtedly, however, it found its way into both through Bœotia from Thrace, together with the worship of Dionysus (Bacchus). The evolution of this cult and the extraordinary developments, both religious and intellectual, which proceeded from this material germ, the fruit of the vine, form one of the most singular and striking episodes in the history of the human mind.<sup>3</sup>

A *second* group of fruit-trees which played a part in Hellenic myth and poetry is represented by the pomegranate, palm, and quince.

The *pomegranate*, which now grows wild in Greece, must also have been brought into the country (probably in connection with some religious cult) at a very early period. Its original home is Syria, where, with its glowing hues, it took so conspicuous a place in the worship of the Phenicians that its name among them, *rimmon*, was identical with that of their sun-god, Hadad-Rimmon (F. C. Movers, *Die Phœnizier*, i. p. 197 ; Hehn, *op. cit.*, p. 206 *et seq.*). Among the Hellenes it was sacred to Hera. The *palm-tree*, found at the present day in some of the islands and as far north as Attica and Bœotia, was well known in antiquity, as is evident from coins and allusions. It was, however, prized more for its slender, graceful beauty (to which Odysseus compares the form of Nausicæa (*Od.*, vi., 162 *et seq.*) and its shade than for its fruit, which, even in Messenia, does not ripen sufficiently to be of value as a food. The golden *quince*, introduced early from Crete (as its Greek name, *Cydonian apple*, shews), was a favourite fruit in Hellas. According to Hehn, the golden apples

<sup>1</sup> The association of the olive with the coming of Peace is, however, very much older than the Athenian fruit-age. It is, as we all know, an olive leaf that the dove carries to Noah, as a token that the Almighty had brought peace upon the earth again. The tradition of the deluge in some form was common to both Aryan and Semitic peoples. (See *Hellas*, p. 98.)

<sup>2</sup> The fig-tree is mentioned in the *Odyssey* although not in the *Iliad*. It is Thracian (not Greek) wine, which the Homeric heroes drink. (See *Hellas*, p. 60.)

<sup>3</sup> Consult the article “ Dionysus,” *Hellas*, p. 229 *et seq.*

of the Hesperides<sup>1</sup> were simply, in Greek imagination, "idealised quinces" (*op. cit.*, p. 211 *et seq.*).

To sum up. At a late period the Greeks had most of the fruits now known round the Mediterranean, some of which, as the orange, found their way into Europe as a result of the conquests of Alexander. In early times, however, they had probably only those mentioned: olives, figs, and grapes; almonds (known to Homer), pomegranates, and quinces; walnuts (called by the Greeks Persian or King's nuts<sup>2</sup>), and chestnuts, both of which are now widespread over north and middle Greece—by no means a bad list, especially when we reflect that their acclimatisation was due to Greek energy and experimenting some thousands of years ago.

To complete our tale of the Greek plant-world, just let us notice here briefly a *third* group of three, which played too important a part in Hellenic life to be overlooked. These are, the laurel, the myrtle, and the plane-tree, now so much at home in Greece that it is difficult to realise the fact of their being foreigners. The first two were introduced very early into the country from the East, probably, like the pomegranate, in the train of religious cults; planted at first round the sanctuaries of the deities whose symbols they were, they speedily became acclimatised and spread throughout Hellas.

*Daphne*, the laurel, takes the first place. With its glossy leaves and aromatic berries—the odour of which was supposed to chase away decay and corruption—it was early consecrated to the god of light, Apollo, and was itself believed to represent his transformed love, Daphne.<sup>3</sup> It became an indispensable adjunct in all rites of purification; the god himself was obliged, according to the myth, after the slaying of the dragon Pytho, to repair to Thessaly, and bring thence a laurel-bough—a ceremony repeated every ninth year at Delphi. The more the Apollo-cult spread, the more did these fragrant evergreen woods spring up around his temples throughout Hellas. At the present day, Daphne, the laurel, grows wild in Thessaly, the home of Daphne, the maiden—varying in size from a shrub to a stately tree. As the god of light, Apollo is also the god of prophecy; hence the laurel-staff became the emblem of the seer. As the god of harmony, and the leader of the muses, he is also the patron of singers; hence the laurel-wreath belonged specially to bards and poets, and crowned the victor in the Pythian Games (Betticher, *op. cit.*, p. 338 *et seq.*; Hehn, *op. cit.*, p. 193 *et seq.*).

The myrtle, however, rivals and even outshines the laurel in the variety of its associations. Its evergreen leaves, reddish-white blossoms, spicy berries—used before the introduction of pepper as seasoning in the Greek *cuisine*—and the fragrance from which it takes its name, made it a general favourite. It spread everywhere through Hellas, and now grows apparently anywhere, inland and by the sea-shore. The myrtle was dedicated chiefly to Aphrodite (Venus), goddess of love and beauty. Hence, at that (to us moderns) most pathetic of domestic events, a Greek wedding—when the partners for life were about to see one another for the *first* time—myrtle-leaves, roses, and violets were strewn before them, emblems of unity, and of what each hoped the other might prove to be.

Not to this alone, however, did the myrtle owe its popularity—it signified not only domestic, but political unity; for it was sacred, in association with the goddess of love, to an attendant constantly found in the train of love—

<sup>1</sup> For the myth, see *Hellas*, p. 219.

<sup>2</sup> From their origin in the realms of the Great King.

<sup>3</sup> For the myth, which doubtless originated in a play upon words, see under "Apollo," p. 130 of *Hellas*.



*Peitho*, sweet persuasion. Consequently, whenever any desirable public work was consummated by the power of heart-stirring and convincing words alone, the myrtle denoted that it had been effected by Aphrodite and her handmaid, *Peitho*. Thus is explained the otherwise inexplicable custom of the wearing of myrtle-wreaths by the archons (chief magistrates) of Athens, in the discharge of their official duties. Such wreaths—only removed when passing sentence of death—were a symbol of the unification of the twelve cities of Attica; a fact said to have been achieved without bloodshed, through persuasion alone, by Theseus. For the same reason, all the citizens who took part in the procession at the great Panathenæa, covered head, breast, and arms with myrtle<sup>1</sup>—emblem of unity obtained by peaceful means—whilst the old men, the *Thallopheoroi*, bore olive-boughs in token that the unity had been brought about by the help of the goddess of peace, *Athena*, patron of the city. Such beautiful meanings did the Hellenes read into the humblest things.

On every domestic occasion of importance—birth-rejoicings, weddings, banquets, sacrifices—myrtle-wreaths were worn. As sacred also to the gods of the lower world, the powers of the great Hereafter, the myrtle appeared at funerals, and myrtle-wreaths were worn at the annual procession of the mystics to Eleusis.<sup>2</sup> In short, so important a part did the myrtle play in Hellenic, and specially in Athenian life, that a section of the market-place at Athens was reserved expressly for its vendors (*Betticher, op. cit.*, p. 445 *et seq.*).

The said market-place was the most popular resort of Athens. Under its spreading, shady *plane-trees*, philosophers walked and talked, idlers lounged, and bargain-hunters chaffered and haggled. The planting of these planes in the Athenian Agora was one of the good deeds of Cimon, the son of Miltiades, and perhaps not that one which least insured his popularity. The plane is, in fact, the tree which wayfarers and travellers of all degrees in Greece have most reason to bless. Wherever a stream or a spring affords it the necessary sustenance, there the plane-tree spreads its noble branches and offers—beneath the dense, deeply-indented foliage to which it owes its name (*platanos*, “the broad-leaved”)—a cool retreat from the overpowering brilliancy of the blue sky and the broiling heat of a Greek noontide. Hehn claims for the plane that, although it is of Eastern origin, and came doubtless from the regions of the Taurus, yet that it was introduced by Aryan, not by Semitic races (*op. cit.*, p. 255; A. Grisebach, *Vegetation der Erde nach ihrer klimatischen Anordnung*, i. p. 310). However this may have been, there can be no doubt that it took marvellously to its new home. Of the immense age and size to which it can attain in Greece, we have a notable example in our own day in the magnificent plane-tree of Vostitza (the ancient *Ægium*) in Achaia. This tree is probably older than the Ottoman empire; its trunk measures 46 feet in circumference; its branches extend for 150 feet; and its hollow trunk served as a prison during the War of Independence (*Murray's Handbook to Greece*, 1884, p. 549). Stackelberg also relates that he saw near the Apollo-temple at Bassæ (also in Peloponnesus), a plane-tree whose trunk measured 48 feet round, and whose hollow was used by a shepherd as a fold for his entire flock (O. v. Stackelberg, *Der Apollo-Tempel von Bassæ*, p. 14, footnote). What wonder then that, as Hehn says, the fame of the plane fills all antiquity? We meet with it in Homer, for it is under a fair plane-tree whence flowed sparkling water that the great omen of the ten years' duration of the siege of Troy—the omen of the snake

<sup>1</sup> For an account of the Panathenæa, see *Hellas*, p. 121. The carrying of the myrtle boughs explains how Harmodius and Aristogeiton were able to conceal the weapons with which to attack the tyrant.

<sup>2</sup> See *Hellas*, p. 270.

and the sparrows—was given to the Achæans, as they tarried in Aulis (*Iliad*, ii. 307). We find it in Herodotus, in the story of the noble plane which so captivated the fancy of Xerxes on the march to Sardis, that he presented it with golden ornaments, on account of its beauty, and put it under the care of one of his Immortals (vii. 31), the Ten Thousand picked troops that formed the flower of his army. We find it, above all, in Plato, in that most charming picture which he gives in the *Phædrus* of the summer resort of Socrates by the Ilissus—"the fair and shady resting-place full of summer sounds and scents"—with its "lofty spreading plane-tree, and the *Agnus castus*, high and clustering, in the fullest blossom and the greatest fragrance"; the stream, deliciously cold, which flows beneath the plane-tree, the sweet breeze, and the chirruping of the grasshoppers, an *ensemble* which suggests to the philosopher all manner of quaint thoughts concerning Myths, Myth-maidens, and Muses.

We might go on adding many trees and plants to our imported group of "thrice three"—our olive, fig-tree, and vine, our pomegranate, palm, and quince, our laurel, myrtle, and plane—trees, such as the cypress, of sufficient importance to be personified in the myths; flowers, such as the rose and the lily, whose Greek names betray their Iranian origin. Enough has been said, however, to shew the gradual transformation of the hillsides and valleys of Hellas under the intelligent care of her sons. Many of the plants which we now look upon as peculiar to the countries round the Mediterranean are, in reality, as we have seen, only the foster-children of this region. What Hehn says of one of them (the oleander, *op. cit.*, p. 358) is true of all. Once introduced, they knew how to help themselves, and put on the appearance of free children of nature. Chief among these are especially the ever-green species, which are best suited to withstand the ordeal of a four-months' drought. Armed with a strong outer-covering, their leaves are completely protected against excessive evaporation; they preserve their sap, their texture remains unaltered, and although deprived of nourishment during the months of drought, such plants can wait until the autumn rains come to swell their cells and renew their life (Grisebach, *op. cit.*, i. p. 285). Thus is explained the peculiar beauty of the woods of Greece, with their glossy shining foliage.

The introduction of the Eastern varieties belongs to the history of the Greek experimenting rather than to a description of the land as they found it. Nevertheless, inasmuch as when the curtain rises in Homer, at the dawn of history, we find the Greeks already acquainted with most of them, it has been necessary to take account of them here. With the exception of the orange, the citron, the aloe, the cactus, the oleander, and one or two subsequent importations, the vegetation of Greece in the later classical period must have been very similar to the vegetation of the present day.

Returning now from this digression to the all-important question of food-supply, as we have already had a glimpse of the diet recommended by one philosopher, let us take a glance at that approved of by another some 300 years later, and we shall learn thereby what was well within the reach of every Hellene. In the *Republic* of Plato, after Socrates has brought together into his ideal state his citizens, the husbandman, the builder, the weaver, the smith, and all the other craftsmen and traders who are to contribute their energy and toil to the common weal (*Repub.*, ii., Prof. Jowett's translation, vol. iii. p. 243), he proceeds to describe their mode of life: "They will feed," he says, "on barley and wheat, baking the wheat and kneading the flour, making noble puddings and loaves; these they will serve up on a mat of reeds or clean leaves, themselves reclining the while upon beds of yew or myrtle-boughs. And they and their children will feast, drinking of the wine which they have made, wearing garlands on their heads, and having praises of the gods on their lips, dwelling together in unity, and having a care that their families do not exceed their means; for they will have an eye to poverty or want."

"But," interposes Glaucon, one of the respondents in the dialogue, "you have not given them a relish to their meal."



"True," says Socrates, "I had forgotten that; of course they will have a relish—salt, and olives, and cheese, and onions, and cabbages, or any other vegetables which are fit for boiling; and we shall give them a dessert of figs, and pulse, and beans; and they will roast myrtle-berries and chestnuts at the fire, drinking in moderation. And with such a diet they may be expected to live to a good old age, and bequeath a similar life to their children after them."

"Yes, Socrates," says Glaucon, in comic dismay, "and if you were making a city of pigs, how else would you feed the beasts!"

The programme of the philosopher finds, therefore, as little favour with "Young Athens" of the classical period, as it would have found with "Young England" of the present day. Nevertheless, in early times the food of the people was almost exclusively vegetarian. Animal food was regarded as something extraordinary, and consisted mainly of the produce of the chase—the flesh of domestic animals being partaken of only as part of the feast which accompanied a sacrifice: this is proved by the curious passing over in later times of the name *hierēia* = "sacred" (given at first to the victim slain for the sacrifice) to any animal slaughtered for ordinary food (Hermann Blümner, *Privatalterthümer*, § 25, note 5).

Notwithstanding, the Achæans of Homer were mighty trenchermen, and loved their roast meat and their honeysweet wine right well—when they could get them. In these degenerate days there is something refreshing in the poet's descriptions of the way in which the heroes make their repast. Take, for instance, the picture of the sacrificial meal in the First Book of the *Iliad* (458 *et seq.*), how the sons of the Achæans gather round the altar by the salt sea (one can almost feel the fresh wind blowing); the cleft wood burns, and the young men stand ready with their five-pronged forks; and after the barley-meal has been sprinkled with pure hands, and the portions for the god have been duly burnt, and libation made of sparkling wine; how they slice the rest of the victim, and roast it carefully with spits! Then they fall to with might and main—nor, as the poet takes care to mention, is there any stint of the banquet, nor of the goblets crowned with wine, nor of the joyous song, the pæan which they raise to the Far-darter.

For those Hellenes who, in historic times, shared the tastes of the Homeric heroes the land made ample provision. The Alpine pastures afforded nourishment in summer to the flocks of goats and sheep which, in winter, descended to the sheltered valleys beneath; the forests abounded in boars, fallow-deer, and other game offering sport which attracted the attention of the huntress Artemis (Diana) herself;<sup>1</sup> and last, but not least, their seas teemed with fish—a food which suited the Attic climate, at least, better than did a diet of flesh.

As regards the fiercer wild beasts, Greece had in very early times probably lions, and certainly wolves and bears; so abundant were the latter that Arcadia is supposed to owe its name to them. Noxious snakes were found in the woods; but harmless varieties exist near the warm springs, and it is to the latter class that the serpents sacred to Asclepios (Æsculapius) belonged.

Amongst a variety of song-birds common to Greece, the swallow and the nightingale were singled out, and in the Attic sagas appear as the transformed sisters, Procne and Philomela. The larger birds of prey, eagles

<sup>1</sup> See the article on "Artemis" (*Hellas*, p. 139); and for the chase in mythic times, the story of Meleager and the Calydonian Hunt, *Hellas*, p. 144.

and vultures, seem also to have attracted much attention, and their flight was considered full of meaning, and taken as an omen.

Finally, mention must be made of the humble murex or purple mussel, which procured for the Hellenes the visits of the Phœnicians, who used it in the production of the famous Tyrian dye. Last of all, we notice the still more humble sponge, which was known to Homer; and the tortoise, which figures in that quaintest of all quaint myths, the story of the baby-thief, Hermes, and his invention of the lyre.<sup>1</sup>

Passing now from the organic to the inorganic productions of Greece, we come to a subject which touches us moderns more closely. What the Hellenes ate—whether they lived on a vegetable or an animal diet, whether they spiced their viands with the berries of the myrtle or of the pepper-tree—matters to us in reality not a jot. Neither does it concern us that the materials which they used in their shipbuilding experiments should have been perishable. But when we come to consider the Hellenes as architects and sculptors, we are roused to a perception of the fact that, within their mountains, they possessed a hidden store of a material which was precisely adapted, not only to develop their own artistic skill, but also to preserve specimens of that skill for the benefit of the after-world.

Suppose, on the one hand, that the art works of the Greeks had been carved in some soft, crumbling stone—would these art works have lasted to our day? Suppose, on the other hand, that Hellas had offered her children nothing but the harder stones, such as granite—would the Greeks have attained to that perfection in style which has made them the art teachers of the world?<sup>2</sup> Both questions, humanly speaking, can only be answered in the negative. In their stores of marble—a material at once beautiful, durable, and workable—Hellas possessed an inexhaustible supply of the very material which her artists required to stimulate and encourage their efforts. Here, again, the land was made for the people, the people for the land—both, alike unconsciously, existed for posterity.

We say Hellas possesses an "inexhaustible" supply of marble, and this appears practically to be the case. The whole of the eastern side of Greece is formed of calcareous rock and crystalline schists, in which layer upon layer of the most superb marble is embedded. Attica alone possesses three exquisite varieties—those of Pentelicus, Hymettus, and Laurium. Again, Bœotia, Laconia, and the Islands, each has its own distinctive kind. Most striking of all is the island of Paros, which is simply a marble mountain, containing a supply so apparently endless as to lead to the fable among the ancients that its exhausted layers filled up again (Strabo, c. 224, Bk. iv. 6). Nor are these marbles all uniform in texture and appearance. Nature seems to have intended to train the artistic eye by offering for selection a choice the most varied. Sometimes the marble is of the purest, most dazzling whiteness, as is that of Paros; sometimes, after exposure in the air and polishing, it becomes of a faint golden hue, as in the marble of Pentelicus, seen in the temple of Theseus and in the ruins on the Acropolis of Athens. Or, again, the white background may be intersected by veins of colour: blue, as in the marble of

<sup>1</sup> For the myth, see *Hellas*, p. 159, under "Hermes."

<sup>2</sup> "Hard stones (such as granite) were used in Egypt, where human toil was of no account, and the greatest technical difficulties seemed to exercise a certain fascination, both in architecture and in sculpture, and indeed with a mastery of technique, which even now excites the admiration of all competent judges. But it is recognised, on the other hand, that this using of hard stone did its part in *hindering the development of Egyptian sculpture, and keeping it back at a certain stage*. The Greeks, on the contrary, seldom used such materials either in building or in sculpture" (Blümner, *Tech. und Term.*, iii. p. 10 *et seq.*)



Hymettus; pale green, as in the Carystian marble (*cipellino*) of Eubœa; or yellow and grey, as in that of Laurium. Yet again, it may not be white at all, but greyish-black, as in the marble of Bœotia; black, as in that of Taenarium; or red, as in the *Rosso antico* of Laconia.

In addition to the foregoing, there were various hard-coloured stones also called "marbles" by the Greeks. Besides the red stone, which they knew as "porphyry," there were the so-called "green marble" (green porphyry, *Verde antico*) of Laconia and Thessaly; and the ophit (serpentine, so called from its appearance, resembling the spots on a serpent's skin) of the island of Tenos (Blümner, *op. cit.*, iii. pp. 8-50; Neumann u. Partsch, *op. cit.*, pp. 209-223).

Whether these well-nigh innumerable varieties were all known to the ancient Greeks or not is a question which we cannot discuss. One thing is certain that, for the most part, each canton and each island in early days was restricted to its own supply, and would probably become acquainted with its own local resources. More important for us to note is the fact that the Hellenes had the fine taste to avail themselves in their chief works exclusively of the pure varieties. They employed mainly the snowy white marble of Paros in their sculpture, the golden-tinged marble of Pentelicus in their architecture. The streaked and coloured varieties were left for the bizarre taste of the Roman period.

Nor were marble and ordinary building-stones the only material that appealed to the artistic sense of the Greeks. In their beds of fine white CLAY they possessed another, on which they practised long before they ventured to chip and hew the rocks for sculptural purposes. The clay of Greece was of the greatest service in the development of statuary, and it is certainly noteworthy that in Corinth and Sicyon, both the seat of vigorous art-schools, where for lack of marble casting in bronze was specially studied, clay suitable for modelling abounds. In the potter's art again (an art which, in early days before metals are freely worked, ranks among the most important to a primitive community<sup>1</sup>), it was of course indispensable. The Athenians, as we know, raised their Ceramic industry to the rank of a fine art, and to this result the fact that, in the clay of Cape Colias, they possessed most excellent material, easily worked and coloured, certainly contributed. Finally, the occurrence of natural pigments—a red chalk or ochre on the island of Ceos, and a white earth, resembling a ready-prepared white-lead, on Melos (C. Bursian, *Geog. von Griechenland*, ii. p. 468 and 497, note 3)—must have helped not a little in the development of painting as well as of colouring generally.

In turning to the METALS of Greece, and the extent to which they were known in early days, we touch upon a most interesting subject. It will, however, be better considered in connection with the experiments which the Greeks made in developing, as best they could, their natural resources. Here we would only point out that they possessed to a small extent both the precious metals; silver was worked in the mines of Laurium, and gold obtained in early times on the islands of Siphnus and Thasos; in the latter it was worked by the Phœnicians. Copper was obtained at or near Chalcis on the island of Eubœa; and iron was tolerably abundant, although not much worked, owing to the difficulty of obtaining fuel enough for smelting purposes.

One fact, however, we ask the reader to note, viz.: that all the mineral wealth of Greece—her marbles and her metals—lies entirely (so far as is yet

<sup>1</sup> For an account of the variety of articles made of earthenware in primitive times, see the description of those found at Hissarlik (Troy) by Dr. Schliemann, and on the island of Therasia by M. Fouque, in *Hellas*, p. 64 *et seq.*

known) on the eastern side of the land. Thus, all natural circumstances—the ruggedness of the western side, the attractiveness and resources of the eastern—combined to keep the Hellene who was capable of progress away from the rude west, and to throw him on the east, the side on which the historical development of the race was destined to take place.

This brief *résumé* of the chief natural productions of Greece will serve to shew what manner of land it was, and what the primitive Hellenes had to expect when they looked around them for their means of sustenance and shelter. We have pictured no soft region of uninterrupted summer, such as travellers describe in southern latitudes, where the fruits of Mother Earth drop of their own accord into the lap of her children. No!—Everywhere and on everything in Hellas was stamped the doctrine of Work! True, when we read the account given of some of the isles of the Archipelago, where grapes, figs, and other luscious fruits, left to themselves, will overhang the rocks, “concealing the soil beneath with their wild luxuriance of fruit and foliage,” we are apt to forget the sterner side of the picture. But the Hellene himself, in early days, was in no danger of forgetting it. Even the commonest necessities of life had to be won by energy—anything beyond these by experimenting. Certainly, from the first, Hesiod’s cheerful diet of mallows and squills, varied by acorns and other wild fruits, was available for all. Long years of labour, however, were required before Plato’s “noble puddings and loaves” could become possible, whilst the fruit-age—the time when the cultivation of olives and figs had attained to such perfection as to render these fruits a staple food for the people—represents, as we have seen, another long period, probably centuries, of watchful care and observation.

In no way was the Hellene exempt from the common lot of man—work he must, and work he did. The only advantage which he possessed over the sons of more northerly latitudes was, that his work was pursued under happier conditions. If Nature would not do all for him, if she insisted on man’s co-operating unceasingly with her, she yet came to his help in a thousand ways, and lightened his toil, so that it did not degenerate into absolute drudgery. Nevertheless, the law for Hellas was, help thyself *in order that* the Higher Powers may be able to help thee. “To him that hath shall be given.”

## APPENDIX: THE PRESENT STATE OF GREECE.

So desolate and forlorn an aspect do many parts of Greece now present to the traveller, that the question of a deterioration both in soil and climate has been seriously argued by scientific observers. Recently, however, as the result of more extended and careful investigation, thinkers, such as Hehn and others, have come to the conclusion that to no failure of vigour on the part of nature is this desolation to be ascribed. Rather must its causes be sought in the treatment which for ages the country has received at the hands of man.

From her physical conditions, Greece is, as we have already seen, a land which imperatively demands the co-operation of man—her months of drought call for artificial irrigation, her floods for restraint. When these conditions are not fulfilled—when the guiding and co-operating hand of Man is withdrawn—Nature languishes. Finally her beauty perishes.

And what are the facts of the case? Simply that for long ages such care and co-operation have been lacking to Greece. The country, for more than a thousand years, has been the sport of Fortune—overrun by barbarous hordes who knew nothing of, and would have cared less for, her past greatness. Goths, Huns, Avars, Bulgarian Slavs, have poured in turn over this unhappy land, and satiated their thirst for blood and for booty upon her.



What little hope of escape from misery remained to her wretched inhabitants in later days was for long years crushed out of them by the Turk. Can we wonder, then, that in certain parts Hellas became a desert?—that her fruitful plains became swamps?

To the past ravages inflicted on the land, moreover, must be added another cause of desolation, which has been going on even in our own time, and under happier auspices—namely, the wanton destruction of the forests. These have been treated in reckless fashion, and used not only for ordinary and legitimate purposes, but ruthlessly by the charcoal-burners, a wild and intractable race, who, with the shepherds, are responsible for many a ruinous fire, and by the classes engaged in the preparation of the resin so much employed (as a preventive against souring) in the wine of Greece. For the sake of a trifling gain, whole forests have been destroyed. Says an eye-witness, Sir Thomas Wyse (*Impressions of Greece*, p. 232): "The pines and firs are not sapped only, which might do no harm, but hacked and gashed. The wound . . . allows the resinous fluid to flow out; but the quantity given is slight while the tree is ruined. Death gradually creeps upward, withering, like a smouldering fire, branch after branch. Whole ranges of these blasted forests are to be seen in all parts of Greece."

With the destruction of the forests, a continual deterioration has been going on, not only in wood, as such, but in agriculture and climate. The remarks on this subject by the same careful observer quoted above, for many years a resident in Greece, are most instructive. As a direct consequence of the loss of the forests, "the rains," he says, "are not provoked, nor the streams collected and usefully distributed, nor the soil nourished, nor the temperature moderated. A fierce storm carries away all the soil, substitutes torrents and devastation for rivers and irrigation, burns up crops, and plants irremediable fever."

All this could be remedied by care and attention. Says Victor Hehn (*op. cit.*, p. 6): "Alluvial earth can be collected in terraces on the mountains, choked-up river channels can be cleansed, bare heaths watered, swampy plains drained by canals. The forests, even, would in this happy climate in no very long period again clothe the slopes of the mountains—if they could only be protected from the goats which attack the young trees, and from fire," and from the carelessness of human beings. . . . "In this climate the creative and healing power of Nature is astounding." What the Hellas of our own day needs, therefore, is that she should once more be cared for and cultivated with the energy and ability of her first sons—a condition of things which peace and freedom will bring back to her with time.

## STIMULATION OF THOUGHT AND INQUIRY

In yet another way was Hellas adapted to the needs of a people destined to be seekers and inquirers—developers of ideas new to the world—and this was in the number of curious and striking natural phenomena which she presented to their notice.

Ages, many ages, before the Græco-Aryans made their appearance upon it, the little land was a-preparing. Mighty agents were at work to fit it for their reception: earthquakes shook it, rent the Peloponnesus from the mainland; and scattered the islands which formed the stepping-stones for their approach; whilst forces, internal and invisible, threw up their bulwarks on the north and the encircling walls round each little chamber. And not only earthquakes, but floods, inundations on a gigantic scale, expansions and shrinkings again of the sea-limits, sinkings and raisings of the sea-bed (such as formed one isthmus, that of Corinth, by which the Peloponnesus was re-attached to the mainland, and destroyed another, that which, south of the Hellespont, is supposed to have once joined Europe to Asia<sup>1</sup>)—all had their share in marking out the present contour of the land. And not only flood, but fire was at work. Fiercely and wildly, from the depths of the sea, it sent up islands destined to

<sup>1</sup> The union of the Black Sea with the eastern basin of the Mediterranean is a work of the Diluvial Age. In the Tertiary epoch, the Greek peninsula was joined to Asia Minor by a land-bridge of varying, but always very considerable breadth. This bridge of land lay originally, as stated above, to the south of the Hellespont (Neumayr, *Zur Geschichte des östlichen Mittelmeerbeckens*, 1882: Pt. 392 of the Virchow-Holtzendorff Collection, cf. Neumayr und Partsch, p. 264).

play their part in the world's history; more gently and intensely, in the heart of the mountains, heat and pressure (aided by moisture or other of nature's mysterious agents) crystallised the raw material which formed their bulk, ordinary limestone, into the goodly stores of pure, fine-grained, brilliant marble which, as we have seen, the Hellenes discovered in their survey of the land.

The physical explanation of some of these phenomena is not far to seek, for Greece lies in a volcanic zone, extending from the Caspian Sea to the Azores, and traces of the changes wrought by volcanic agency are everywhere visible. The Mediterranean is still "undermined by fire," which manifests itself not only in Vesuvius and Etna, but in the hot springs of Thermopylæ and Trœzen. The transverse fractures by which the Greek mountains are rudely torn, the cauldron-shaped hollows into which they are scooped, the gloomy, tortuous glens by which they are pierced—all point to the action of some mighty internal force or forces, and to a transition-period of fierce elemental conflict, during which the formless chaos was reduced to its present proportions and fitted for the abode of man.

Such scenes were undoubtedly calculated to awaken thought, and there is evidence that from the earliest times the Hellenes were struck by them and set themselves seriously to work to find out their cause. This early evidence is to be found in the myths, but it is not to be despised on that account.

(1.) **Volcanic Phenomena**:—(a) *Eruptions*.—The elemental conflict which preceded the present order of things the Greeks depicted as war in heaven. A succession of three dynasties (two of which are deposed by force)—represented respectively by Uranus, the dim beginning; Kronus, the Ripener; and Zeus, Light and Wisdom—typify three periods supposed to have elapsed before the *Kosmos*—i.e. the world, regarded as a perfectly-arranged and beautifully-ordered whole—was complete.

Before Zeus, the final ruler of the universe, attains to a permanent victory, therefore, he has many and fierce foes to contend with. The Titans, representatives of the rude forces which we have been considering—Earthquake, Fire, and Flood—offer him battle,<sup>1</sup> but in the end he conquers and imprisons them. No sooner is this accomplished, however, than a new enemy starts up, more to be feared than a dozen Titans. This is Typhon, the most terrible of monsters, graced with one hundred fire-spitting heads.<sup>2</sup> Him also, after a determined struggle, Zeus takes captive and buries beneath Mount Etna. Now whenever the giant turns himself in his subterranean dungeon, the mountain shakes and groans, and spouts forth fire. The imprisonment of Typhon is, therefore, according to the myths, the cause of volcanic eruptions.

At first sight, we are inclined to smile at the explanation, and to think that, although imagination may have had a large share in the invention of the myth, yet that of "serious thought" there is in it not a trace. We remember, however, that every genuine myth has a kernel, and looking again a little more closely, we find that this myth is no exception to the rule. The kernel—the real explanation—lies in the name. Typhon (Smoke and Vapour) is neither more or less than a personification of pent-up gases and vapours striving to find an outlet. To the working of these pent-up vapours, and not to the corporeal struggles of any monster, it was that the Greeks attributed the phenomena of volcanic eruptions. Hesiod's description of the combat with Typhon is really what Preller has called it (*Griechische Mytho-*

<sup>1</sup> For the spirited translation of Hesiod's *Titanomachia*, or Battle of the Titans, see *Hellas*, p. 87.

<sup>2</sup> For the myth of Typhon, see *Hellas*, p. 89.



*logie*, i. p. 55), "one of the most remarkable allegorical pictures ever composed, of one of the grandest sights in nature—a mountain breathing forth fire." If the author of the myth had doubled the number of Typhon's fire-breathing heads, he would have been guilty of no exaggeration, for Etna actually possesses 200 lesser cones, each of which is a miniature volcano in itself. As for the sounds sent forth by the monster—the roaring, bellowing, barking, hissing—all are simply an attempt to describe what has been characterised by those who have heard it as "utterly indescribable"—namely, first, the subterranean rumbling and grumbling of the steam forcing its way upwards in the funnel of the crater through the solid lava and other obstructions that bar its progress, and then the tremendous crash of the final outburst. So much for the truthfulness of the allegory.

Is there, then, no evidence of serious thought in this nearly three-thousand-years-old gaseous theory of volcanic explosions? Verily, it bears a marvellous resemblance to the conclusions arrived at by geologists of our own day.<sup>1</sup> Where the fable arose is not known. Homer places it "in the land of the Arimoi" (*Iliad*, ii. 782), supposed to represent some volcanic district of Asia Minor; but it was localised also in Bœotia, in Sicily as we have seen, and even transferred to the Caucasus. Typhon or Typhæus was, in short, the mythical expression of antiquity for volcanic energy and its destructive effects.

Pursuing the history of Zeus and his conflicts, we find him next engaged in the *Gigantomachia*, or Battle with the Giants—representatives of the minor disturbances still going on within the earth. The battle takes place in Phlegra, *i.e.* Fire-land, assigned by the ancients either to the peninsula of Pallene in Thrace, which bears evident marks of volcanic action, or to a spot in the Alpheius valley in Arcadia, where fire issues from the ground, and where, in historic times, sacrifices were offered to the Lightning, and Storm, and Thunder (Paus., viii. 29, 1), by whose aid Zeus won the victory.

The Giants, too, are finally overcome by Zeus; and with this conquest ends the elemental warfare: Light and Order rule the Kosmos—and now the phenomena of Fire appear no longer as destructive, but as beneficent and formative agents, personified in other mythic beings of a higher order. The centre of the Fire-myths in Hellas is the island of Lemnos, called in antiquity "Fire-island," where the Greeks had before their eyes a volcano, Mosychlos, which, if not actually erupting, continued to flame down to the time of Alexander. The whole island shews traces of its volcanic origin, and we need not be surprised, therefore, to find it connected with two groups of fire-myths. A temple near Mosychlos marked the spot, not only where the little Fire-god, Hephæstus (the Lightning) fell when his hard-hearted mother, Hera, flung him out of Olympus because of his deformity, his halting gait (*i.e.* the flickering of the flame, or the zig-zag course of the lightning), but also where Prometheus (the Fire-bringer) brought down his secret treasure to mortals—an offence which had to be expiated first by the noble Titan himself, and in historic times by succeeding generations of Lemnians.<sup>2</sup>

In later myths, volcanoes (not excepting Etna) and volcanic islands were associated with the glorious artist (*klytotechnes*) Hephæstus the Smith. They

<sup>1</sup> "Even in the more stupendous manifestations of vulcanism, the lava should be regarded rather as the sign than as the cause of volcanic action. It is the *pressure of the imprisoned vapour and its struggles to get free* which produces the subterranean earthquakes, explosions, and outpourings of lava" (Geikie, *Text-book of Geology*, p. 223 : 1882). The italics are ours.

<sup>2</sup> For the fire-worship of the Lemnians and their yearly nine days' firelessness, see *Hellas*, p. 97.

were his forges and workshops, where he toiled with his one-eyed assistants, the Cyclopes, dæmons of the Fire and the Lightning. Another striking proof of the fidelity with which the Greeks adhered to Nature in their myths is to be found in the story which makes the little Hephæstus lie concealed in the sea until he is grown up.<sup>1</sup> For not only are volcanoes commonly found near the sea, but those of the Mediterranean, including even colossal types such as Etna and Vesuvius, were in the beginning of their history (the infancy of Hephæstus) submarine craters which owe their present dimensions partly to the accumulation of ejected materials, and probably also partly to an elevation of the sea bottom (A. Geikie's *Text-book of Geology*, p. 223).

(b) *Upheavals of Land*.—In another way volcanic phenomena forced themselves on the notice of the Hellenes. Let us look at an instance of this:—

We sail into a bay belonging to an island group in the Ægæan. Oval in form, it is shut in for two-thirds of its circumference on the north, east, and south by a large island shaped like a half-moon, whilst the western side is only partially closed by two smaller islands. The entrance into the bay makes a weird impression on the mind. As we leave the open sea, the water grows dark and darker in hue; around rise precipitous rocks mostly pitch-black in colour, relieved by lighter bands; high above, on the verge of the rocks, like nests hanging over the abyss, are perched the houses of the inhabitants, reached from the landing-places by winding paths. In the middle the bay is of immense depth, and from its bosom rise three little islets, black and desolate as the surrounding cliffs. Here, indeed, is a scene calculated to make even the most inconsiderate pause, and ask: What does it mean?

The answer has been given by modern science. The black rocks towering upwards in such fearful steepness are the walls of a gigantic crater; the bay in the middle is the water-filled abyss, formed by the falling in of the crater; the three larger islands represent the rim of the crater, fragments of what originally formed one island of considerable size; the three little black islets on the bosom of the bay are *new-formed land*, sent upwards by the fiery Typhon who caused the catastrophe in prehistoric times, and has continued his activity, his tossings and his turnings, in the depths of the sea, down to the years of grace, 1866–1870.

The reader will not need to be told that we are in the Bay of Santorin, and are contemplating its island-group—Thera (Santorin,<sup>2</sup> called by Élie de Beaumont “one of the most remarkable and instructive islands in the world”), Therasia, and Aspronisi—for this corner of the Ægæan Sea has become “classic” ground in a double sense to Europe (Fouque, *Santorin et ses Eruptions*. Cf. also Neumann u. Partsch, *op. cit.*, p. 274; Bursian, *op. cit.*, ii. p. 520).

Of the catastrophe itself and the terrible fate which overtook the inhabitants of the island, the Greeks of historic times knew nothing, and the myth by which they tried to account for the non-natural aspect of Thera is poor in the extreme. They represented it as having sprung from a clod of earth given by Triton to the Argonauts, who called the island *Calliste*, “the beautiful”—a name which shows that they preferred the verdure of its southern parts to the sombre region which interests us moderns.

In another way, however, in relation to another class of myths, the Santorin group is exceedingly interesting—to those myths, namely, which tell

<sup>1</sup> For the myths concerning Hephæstus, see article “Hephæstus” in *Hellas*, p. 112.

<sup>2</sup> See the description of the Santorin-group given in *Hellas* at p. 40, and the account of the prehistoric village on Therasia at p. 64. The modern appellation of Thera—Santorin—is a corruption of the name of the patron of the island, Sant Irene, martyred here in 304.



of the sudden appearance of islands. When we read of Delos rising from the waves to afford a birthplace for Apollo, or of Rhodes being upheaved to remedy an injustice done to Helios<sup>1</sup>—we smile again, and class such fables with the sudden growth of the famous beanstalk. Nevertheless, when the old poets told these stories—whether the phenomena were applicable to the islands in question, or not—they at least told nothing that was in itself improbable—as is proved by the rise of the little Kaimenis, or “burnt islands,” in the Bay of Santorin in historic times. The same phenomenon may have occurred, and doubtless did occur, elsewhere during the ages in which the myths arose.

An account of the appearance of one of these islets—probably the kernel of Palæa or Old Kaimeni—about 199 B.C., has been preserved by the old writers (Strabo, p. 57; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.*, ii. 87, 202, *cf.* iv. 23, 70; Seneca, *Quæst. Nat.*, ii. 26, 4; Paus., viii. 33, 4). It was preceded by flames, showers of stones, and clouds of smoke. Then appeared great rocks, and finally the peak of a burnt-out mountain showed itself. This increased its height, and grew to the size of an island. The Rhodians were the first to take courage and step on the new-formed land, which they called Hierà, the “Sacred,” and dedicated to Poseidon (Neptune).

From this narrative we can see how such an event would impress itself on the mind of an imaginative people—how land rising from unknown depths amid fire and flame would seem to be a fitting prelude to the birth of a god. Although these accompaniments are certainly not mentioned in the old Homeric Hymn to the Delian Apollo, this may well have been (from poetic motives) to emphasise what follows—for no sooner has the little god of light touched the earth than all Delos “flames in gold,” like a mountain blooming with the flowers of the forest. (*Cf.* F. G. Welcker, *Griech. Götterlehre*, ii. p. 341.)

Thera, however, is by no means the only scene of volcanic action in the Ægean. The eruptions here seem to have followed an old line of fissure—beginning in the east with the islands of Thera, Melos, Cimolus, and Polyægus, and continued in a succession of tiny islets, likewise of volcanic origin, westwards as far as Argolis and the small peninsula of Methana in Træzenia. They appear, judging from the variety of volcanic products thrown up, to be the result, not of one gigantic “hearth,” but of several independent craters at work in the sea. Evidently, however, a connection exists, and Typhon has shown himself active at both the extremities, Thera and Methana, in historic times—at Thera, as we have seen, by *island-forming*, at Methana by *mountain-building*. About the year 282 B.C. there was suddenly thrown up, as it were before the very eyes of the world, a gigantic mountain-mass, which modern observers have found to consist almost entirely of volcanic stone—a reddish-brown trachyte (Bursian, *op. cit.*, ii. pp. 349–91; Strabo, p. 59; Ovid, *Met.*, xv. p. 296 *et seq.*).

(c) *Hot-Springs*.—There only remains for us now to notice briefly the hot-springs of Greece. These phenomena are to be found in several of the localities already mentioned—on Melos and Methana, and along ancient lines of cleavage, the results of earthquakes and volcanic action. Thus the most celebrated of all, the hot-springs of Thermopylæ, which gave their name (Hot-Gates) to the famous Pass, form one of a series, continued eastwards in the sulphur-springs of Ædepsus on the island of Eubœa, and westwards in those of Hypata on the slopes of Ceta, the capital of the little country of the

<sup>1</sup> For the myth of the birth of Apollo, see *Hellas*, p. 124. For that of the appearance of Rhodes, see *ibid.*, p. 190.

Ænians, a district included in Thessaly. All these yield warm salt-water, smelling strongly of sulphur, and depositing a sediment which covers the ground with a whitish crust; they were used in antiquity for medicinal purposes (e.g. Fiedler, *Reise durch Griechenland*, i. p. 209). The springs of Hypata are not mentioned by the old writers; but Bursian is of opinion that their healing effects may have contributed as much as the abundance in the locality of hellebore (a plant with which the ancients associated marvellous and baneful properties) to fasten in later days on Hypata in particular the general Thessalian reputation for witchcraft (Bursian, *op. cit.*, i. p. 89). In the time of Plutarch, the baths of Ædepsus, in Eubœa, which are the hottest of all, were the *rendezvous* of invalid or fashionable Greece.

What concerns us, however, in our present inquiry is that the Greeks very early noticed these phenomena, and strove to account for them. The mythical explanation, viz., that Athena had caused them to spring up for the refreshment of the hero Heracles (Hercules), although not very satisfactory, is by no means so arbitrary as at first sight appears. Athena, as we know, was worshipped as Hygieia, the goddess of Health; hence the myth, in its origin, was simply an allegorical way of describing the hygienic properties of the waters. Many of the hot-springs, therefore, are naturally connected with the Heracles-saga. Those at Thermopylæ were specially sacred (together with the whole district) to the hero, and an altar was erected to him in the Pass (Herodotus, vii. p. 176). Along the other great line of cleavage, again, on the northern shores of the Corinthian Gulf, at the foot of Mount Taphiassus, flow sulphur springs, supposed to mark the spot where was buried Nessus, the centaur slain by Heracles. Finally, we meet with hot-springs again in Bœotia, at the north-eastern foot of Mount Laphystium, an extinct volcano,<sup>1</sup> through the crater of which the hero is said to have emerged from the Lower World, dragging behind him the terrible Cerberus, watch-dog of the Infernal Regions—a feat which, according to Homer (*Iliad*, viii. 366 *et seq.*), he could not have accomplished without the help of Athena.

(2.) **Earthquakes and Disappearance of Land.**—Passing now to the next series of natural phenomena—those connected with earthquakes—we come to a subject which touched the Greeks of the Historical Period much more closely than did the volcanic phenomena previously described. With the latter, indeed, it is closely connected; for just as we know that Greece lies in a volcanic zone, so do we know also that this same zone has been called with equal truth “a great belt of earthquake disturbance.”

The Greeks had ample opportunity of becoming acquainted with seismic phenomena, both by actual experience and by what they saw around them. The country, in fact, as already pointed out, owes much of its present contour to the action of earthquakes. Evidences of dislocation are abundant everywhere; and specially do the two great lines of cleavage at once attract attention—that which sundered Peloponnesus from the mainland, to which it remains attached, as it were, only by a thread; and the no less remarkable rent on the eastern side, which tore the island of Eubœa from the continent.

These are the effects of the elemental conflicts of prehistoric times, and far north, on the frontier, there exists a similar manifestation, which, beyond any other, seems to have stamped itself upon the Greek imagination as a consequence and result of some powerful interference with nature.

<sup>1</sup> The name “Laphystium” is thought by Forchhammer (*Hell.*, p. 15) to mean “stone-producer” or “stone-discharger,” in allusion to the showers of lava emitted by the crater (from *las* = “stone,” and *phyo* = “to produce,” or *physao* = “to discharge”). Another, and a much more terrible significance (as we shall see shortly) was however attached to the name. For “Cerberus,” see *Hellas*, p. 283.



Between two great opposing mountain masses—Olympus and Ossa—lies a hollow gorge, so narrow as in parts to afford space only for the river which flows along it beneath gigantic cliffs that tower above, on either side, to a height of nearly 1500 feet. This is the famous pass emphatically described both by its ancient name of Tempē, “the Cleft,” and also by that which it bore in the Middle Ages—Lykóstomo, “the Wolf’s Jaws.”

Here, indeed, is a scene which, like Thera, might well make a thoughtful observer pause and ask: How did it originate? What force rent those tremendous “Jaws” asunder? To this the Hellenes themselves replied: A beneficent force! for through these opened jaws was disgorged the flood of waters which would else have overspread the land and turned the fruitful plains of Thessaly into a standing lake. The Peneius, which discharges itself peacefully through Tempē into the sea, receives the waters of the other rivers of Thessaly, four in number, which in their turn collect and bear to it those of all the streams pouring down from the mountain walls of the Great Plain. The two Thessalian lakes, Nessonis and Bœbeïs, were thought in antiquity to be the sunken remnants of the great sheet of water which was supposed to have overspread the land in primeval times (Strabo, c. 430, vii. 5). “Thessaly,” says Herodotus (vii. 139, cf. Leake, *Northern Greece*, iv. p. 513 *et seq.*), “is surrounded on every side by very high mountains; to the east by Pelion and Ossa, the extremities of which are united together, to the north by Olympus, to the west by Pindus, to the south by Othrys. In the midst is the hollow Thessaly, watered by many rivers, of which the five principal, having joined their waters into one channel (the Peneius), are discharged into the sea through a narrow strait. It is reported that anciently the valley which gives passage to the river did not exist; that neither the rivers nor the lake Bœbeïs had names, though the waters flowed as at present, and that they thus made Thessaly a sea (*pêlagos*).”

Let us add that in these suppositions the old writers have been confirmed by modern geologists—without Tempē, there could be no Thessaly. Well, indeed, might the opening of the Wolf’s Jaws appear an operation of the utmost importance to the Thessalians, and well might they shudder when, in after days, they heard of the cold-blooded possibility suggested by Xerxes: that, by merely shutting up the “Jaws” again—blocking the passage of the Peneius to the sea—it would be easy to dispose of a hostile Thessaly (Herodotus, vii. 130).

The beneficent force to which the Hellenes assigned the “cleft” of Tempē was—the force of the sea. In the language of the myths, it was due to Poseidon. “The Thessalians say,” remarks Herodotus in the passage just cited, “that Poseidon opened the channel at Tempē, through which the Peneius flows, and this will appear probable to those who believe that Poseidon shakes the earth, for the separation of the mountains, Olympus and Ossa, seems to me to have been caused by an earthquake.”

In these words of the historian, we have one of the leading theories of antiquity concerning earthquakes: viz., that they were caused by the rushing of the sea waves into hollow caves on the coast, whence penetrating far inland, they shook the solid foundations above, and produced the quaking and rending asunder of the earth’s crust. This theory—although far removed from the truth—is neither so meagre nor so inadequate an explanation as it appears, for it is based upon another—which, from the standpoint of the ancients, was satisfactory enough: Poseidon (Neptune), “the Might of the Sea,” becomes *Enosichthōn*, “the Earth-shaker,” because he is first *Gæœochus*, “the Earth-upholder.” To repeat here what the reader will find more fully discussed elsewhere,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See under “Poseidon,” *Hellas*, p. 204.

"Poseidon was supposed to hold up the earth, as Atlas supported the sky—an idea which originated in the fact that, seen from shipboard, the land appears to rest on the sea as on a foundation." It will be seen, therefore, that on this theory it is easy for the Earth-upholder to become the Earth-shaker at his pleasure; and the awful suddenness and vehemence of an earthquake, or an earthquake-wave, seemed in those early days only the natural outcome of the revengeful and implacable temper of the "dark-haired Earth-shaker," the choleric monarch of the sea.

Poseidon, therefore, was worshipped in all parts of Greece visited by earthquakes, and at Tempē a temple was erected in his honour, as *Petræus*, "the Rock-cleaver," on the alluvial ground at the mouth of the Peneius.

It was, however, along the southern part of the great line of fracture—the northern coast of Peloponnesus—that the power of the Earth-shaker was most clearly manifested. Achaia, the smallest district of Peloponnesus, is merely a narrow seam of land, lying between the mountains and the sea, and best described by its prehistoric name of *Ægialos* or *Ægialeia*, "the coast-land." Concussions of earthquake, so travellers tell us, have tossed the surface of the little land into a multiplicity of forms—deep dells and craggy steeps, yawning ravines, and cloud-capped precipices (Dodwell, *Tour through Greece*, ii. p. 303). Seen from the sea, the spurs of the mountains, as they descend into the plain, lie in huge convulsed masses, or fall in abrupt terrace-fashion, like a succession of gigantic landslips (Sir T. Wyse, *Excursion in the Peloponnesus*, ii. p. 281). Here, in this district, sacred in early days to Poseidon, occurred in 373 B.C., two years before the battle of Leuctra, one of the most appalling catastrophes of ancient times—a fearful earthquake, by which the city of Bura was destroyed, and the neighbouring city of Helice, once the chief town of Achaia, completely swallowed up by the wrathful waves. This terrible fate overtook the city during the night, and when, next day, 2000 Achæans came together to bury the dead, they found to their horror not a trace of the city remaining—not a man nor a dwelling. The Hellenes regarded this as a judgment on the inhabitants, who had driven suppliants out of the sanctuary of Poseidon Heliconios and murdered them. Centuries later, the fishermen of the Corinthian Gulf declared that their nets often became entangled in the image of the god, standing sternly upright beneath the waves, as though testifying to the justice of the sentence on the doomed city (Paus., vii. 24, 7; Diodor., xv. 48).<sup>1</sup>

Hardly less dramatic is a similar event mentioned by Thucydides and others. About a century earlier (464 B.C.), in "hollow Lacedæmon, cleft with glens," occurred an earthquake, which detached one peak of Taygetus, destroyed Sparta, and buried more than 20,000 Lacedæmonians beneath the ruins. This event also was regarded as a punishment sent by Poseidon on the Spartans for the murder of certain Helots who had taken refuge as suppliants in his sanctuary at Tænarum; and it had far-reaching political consequences, for the enslaved Helots took the opportunity of the general terror (and probably, also, of the cause assigned to the catastrophe), and rose in rebellion. These Helots, mark you, were Hellenes, descendants of the Messenians whose country the Spartans had, as we have seen (p. 26), unscrupulously annexed. They established themselves on Mt. Ithome—not only the chief fortress, but the national sanctuary of Messenia—and there began the third Messenian War, a struggle which lasted ten years. When, finally, in the tenth year of the siege, the Messenians could no longer hold out, a powerful ally was at hand in the shape of a Delphic oracle current among the Spartans, which bade them "let the suppliant of Zeus Ithomatos go free"—a warning which resulted in

<sup>1</sup> For a fuller account see under "Poseidon," *Hellas*, p. 206.



the regaining of their liberty, at the cost of exile, by the Messenian Helots. Nearly a century later (369 B.C.) their descendants were brought back and their wrongs avenged by Epaminondas (Thucyd., i. 101, 128, 103; Strabo, c. 367, vii. 6; Plut., *Cim.*, 16).

Between the terrible catastrophe of 373 B.C., which swallowed up Helice, and the year 1861 of our era, Peloponnesus has been visited by some thirteen earthquake-shocks, in which the city of Corinth was the chief sufferer, having been laid in ruins no fewer than three times—in A.D. 77, 522, and 1858. Nor has the northern half of Greece been exempt, witness the earthquake which occurred at Thebes in 1853 (T. F. T. Schmidt, App. iv. to Wyse's *Excursion in the Peloponnesus*).

Now, wending our way eastwards, we have in the long narrow island of Eubœa a most remarkable phenomenon. Fragment for fragment, it corresponds precisely to that part of Middle Greece from which it was torn. Geological evidence shows that its mountains are continuations—end-masses—of the chains of the mainland: the steep heights of the promontory of Cenæum on Eubœa answer to those of Cæta; the hot-springs of Ædepsus to those of Thermopylæ; a fertile strip on the coast to a similar strip in Locris (P. W. Forchhammer, *Hellenika*, p. 12); and at one place so closely does the island approach the mainland, that the strait between, the Euripus, was bridged over in ancient as in modern times.<sup>1</sup>

The view that Eubœa had formerly been one with the continent was held in antiquity, and is mentioned by Strabo, Pliny, and others (Strabo, c. 60, i. 19; Pliny, ii. 88, 204; iv. 12, 63). There are numerous allusions also to visitations of earthquake in historic times. Thus, Thucydides tells of one which happened in Eubœa during the Peloponnesian War, and in which a portion of the island was swallowed up by the sea. The views of the historian are in curious contrast to the popular mythical theory of Herodotus, given above. Thucydides explains the occurrence of the earthquake sea-wave (which, as we now know, is propagated together with the land-wave from the centre of the disturbance) by the force and rapidity of the rebound of the sea upon the land, from which it has just been repelled by the violence of the seismic shock (iii. 89).

Thus, the phenomenon of Eubœa, no less than that of Tempē, aroused thought and inquiry among the Hellenes, and that, if we are to believe our modern myth-interpreters, long before the age of Thucydides. It is quite possible that the event may have actually occurred within the memory of man (according to modern views, it must have taken place at a relatively late period) (Bursian, *op. cit.*, ii. p. 349, 395); and consequently the story of the catastrophe may have been handed down as part of the great body of tradition embodied in the myths. However this may have been, Forchhammer, who has made the most elaborate study of the locality, sees the rending of Eubœa distinctly set forth in the saga of the Cætæan Heracles (Forchhammer, *op. cit.*, p. 16 *et seq.*).

He takes up the story at the point where the hero has just returned in triumph with Iole from the sacking of Œchalia, and is about to offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving to Zeus on the promontory of Cenæum. Lichas, the messenger of the forsaken wife, brings him the fatal robe which Deianeira, in her innocence, imagines will restore her husband's love to her. Heracles puts it on as his sacrificial garb; immediately the sun beats upon it, the texture grows soft and fastens itself round him like a coat of wax; the poison sinks

<sup>1</sup> For an account of the Euripus and its fluctuating tides, which, no less than the island itself, engaged the attention of antiquity, see *Hellas*, p. 43.

into his veins and causes intolerable agony. Mountains and sea resound with the cries of the hero; in a paroxysm of fury he seizes the unfortunate Lichas, and dashes him into the sea; after him he throws the robe, tearing off with it the adhering quivering flesh. Then, in his despair, he has himself conveyed across the sea, carried to the summit of Ceta, and placed upon the pyre whence his apotheosis finally takes place.

This, by far the most dramatic and powerful of the numberless sagas concerning the hero, a story which Sophocles has invested with an intensely human interest, Forchhammer interprets thus: the long robe thrown off by Heracles is the island of Eubœa; the bringer of the fatal gift, Lichas, is represented by the little islets, the Lichades, between Eubœa and the mainland; the cries and groans of the hero are the fearful sounds that accompany the rending of earth's surface; and Deianeira, the deserted wife, whose one fault is that she loved, not wisely, but too well, Deianeira is, what her name denotes, the "enemy of man," the destroying force of fire and earthquake.

So much for modern myth-interpreters! We shall not quarrel with the reader if he prefer Sophocles to Forchhammer.

There only remains for us now to notice the disappearance of land. Of this in connection with earthquakes, in historic times, we have already had two examples in Achaia and Eubœa; and, therefore, when Pausanias (viii. 33, 4) tells us that Chryse, a little island near Lemnos, the supposed scene of the wounding of the unfortunate Philoctetes on the voyage to Troy, was swallowed up by the sea, there is no reason to doubt the truth of the statement. In fact, soundings taken between Lemnos and the continent would seem to indicate the presence there of submerged land (Choiseul-Young, *Voyage pittoresque dans l'Empire Ottoman*, ii. p. 218 et seq. Cf. Neumann u. Partsch, p. 338).

(3.) **Phenomena connected with Water.**—No less remarkable than the phenomena presented by the solid earth of Greece, are those of the liquid element on her surface. Just as we have seen land upheaving and land vanishing, so now we shall see water appearing and water disappearing in apparently the most mysterious and inexplicable fashion. Torrents, big with the winter's rains, rush down the mountain-sides, form a league, swell into a mighty flood as though, united, they would devastate the land, and then—are seen no more. Rivers pursue an open-air course for miles, and then suddenly vanish, to reappear perhaps at some great distance. Lakes rise as if by magic, and then, as by a stroke of the enchanter's wand, where the waters stood, dry ground presents itself.

(a) *Rise and Fall of Lakes.*—Lest the reader should think that we are drawing upon imagination, let us hear what an eye-witness of one of these astonishing sights has to say about it: "Suddenly," says Mr. Clark (*Peloponnesus: Notes of Study and Travel*, pp. 311, 312), "at a break in the forest, our eyes were greeted with a scene of which the charm was enhanced by the surprise. Two thousand feet below us lay a wide expanse of still water deep among the hills, reflecting black pine woods, and grey crags, and sky now crimson with sunset . . . a lake seven miles long and seven miles broad, washing the base of famous Cyllene . . . worthy to be matched for size with Windermere, for beauty with Lucerne."

Yes; but how comes a lake to be washing the base of Cyllene?—"a lake which as yet has been sung by no poet, mentioned by no historian, described by no geographer." There's the rub! In vain does the traveller scan his map; in vain does he jog his memory. The lake is no mirage of the desert. True, but it has, notwithstanding, no real existence, no right of tenure. With all its beauty, the water is an intruder and a despot which has taken possession



of the plain of Phœbus and ousted the unfortunate inhabitants, who are now encamped upon the northern hillside.

Such was the appearance presented by the plain when visited by Mr. Clark in 1857. When seen by Colonel Leake in 1806 it was partly dry ground, partly swamp; in the age of the Antonines it was dry (Pausanias, viii. 14, 1; Leake, *Mœrea*, iii., p. 135); and, further back still in antiquity, its meadows and cornfields supported a brave race who cultivated it assiduously. So impossible did the rise of a "lake" appear even to a shrewd observer like Colonel Leake, that he speaks of certain water-marks on the hills around (attributed by Pausanias to a previous submersion) as giving rise to "the vulgar belief of the waters having once covered the whole Pheneatic plain." The water-line he supposed to be the result of evaporation; but the "vulgar belief" for once proved right.<sup>1</sup>

To what, then, are we to attribute the sudden appearance of the "lake"? Simply to the fact that the waters of Pheneatis have found the usual channels by which they make their escape to the river Ladon blocked up, and so have submerged the plain.

To understand this we must call to mind once more the little "chambers" into which the country is divided, and specially its deep cauldron-shaped basins, surrounded on all sides by mountain walls which effectually hinder the flow of the rivers along "natural" channels. But for a certain peculiarity in these mountain walls, every hill-enclosed valley of Greece would be a Pheneus. The fortunate peculiarity which prevents this is the soft calcareous rock of which they are formed, and through which, in the course of ages, the waters have hollowed out for themselves subterranean passages from which they ultimately emerge into the daylight again, and either find their way to the sea or join a larger river. Whatever may be the differences between the western and the eastern sides of Greece, and to whatever geological age the mountains may belong, they one and all present this feature. Whether we go north and study the lake of Joánnina (Pambotis) in Epeirus; or east to that of Topólia (Copaïs) in Beotia; or south to the valley of Eastern Arcadia; Pheneus, Stymphalus, Caphyæ, Orchomenus, and the double hill-divided plain of Mantinea-Tegea—we find the mountains, without exception, affording this outlet to the waters of the district, the *katabothra*, or caverns by which they enter, and the subterranean canals along which they flow. It will be readily understood now how any obstruction to the mouth of these underground labyrinths—such as might be caused by fallen rocks, trees, and *débris*, or any internal alteration such as might result from an earthquake shock—would prevent the escape of the waters, and thus cause them to rise in the valley and form a "lake."

The most typical instance of these phenomena is the famous Copaïs in Beotia, better described by its other ancient name of the "Cēphissian" Lake, for, most certainly, if there were no river Cēphissus there would be no floods, and consequently no "lake" on a grand scale.<sup>2</sup> The Cēphissus, in fact, forms

<sup>1</sup> An old Romaïc (modern Greek) prediction had foretold that the lake of Pheneus would never fill again until Greece had regained her liberty. Strangely enough when, in 1821, the revolt of Ali Pasha (in which the Greeks took part) began, the lake did reappear. Whether this phenomenon was "assisted" or not we cannot say; but who can wonder that the Greeks are somewhat "superstitious"?

<sup>2</sup> The ancients used the names *Copaïs* and *Cēphissus* without any clear discrimination, yet in *Copaïs* (or Lake of Copæ, at the north-east extremity of the basin) there is always some water, even in summer. *Cēphissus* comprehends the whole tract of occasional lakes and marshes, enlarging or diminishing its boundaries according to the season (Leake, *Northern Greece*, ii., p. 158). See also *Hellas*, p. 14.

the lake. One of the largest rivers in Northern Greece, it rises in the Phocian valley, receives all the snow-swollen torrents of Parnassus and Oetia—think what that means!—and then proceeds to pour them into and swamp the northern Boeotian plain—a work in which it is aided by two smaller rivers, the Melas (or Black-stream) and the Probatia. The Copaic plain is really a deep basin sunk among the mountains, which hem it in on all sides, and in which some twenty *katabothra* exist. These, however, are not sufficient to carry off the immense amount of water in winter, and consequently the formation of the lake is an annual occurrence. Finally, by May the floods brought by the Cephissus and its allies begin to sink, and soon they have disappeared from the greater part of the plain; they have found their way across it, pierced the boundary mountains on the eastern side, and discharged themselves into the Eubœan Sea. Not, however, precisely as they came; they have paid for their temporary occupation by a very precious deposit. The mineral particles which they brought down from the mountains in their impetuous course, and the salts which they held in solution, have been left behind, filtered through in their passage across the plain, forming a soil of wonderful fertility—one of the richest, as we have seen, in all Greece. The Copaic basin thus reminds us of the Nile valley. To this annual overflow Boeotia was indebted for her wealth; to it, also, as will easily be perceived, she owed her heavy, “fat” air, her mists and fogs—that *crassus aer*, in short, which in antiquity had passed into a proverb.

(b) *The Barathra or Katabothra*.—The foregoing notable instances will suffice to show the exceeding importance of these natural outlets for Greece. A brief description of them, therefore, will not be without interest.

In antiquity they were called simply pits, *barathra*.<sup>1</sup> The modern term, *Katabothron*, is now often applied to the whole of the underground passage, but erroneously, for this consists of (1) the *barathron* proper—pit or cavern into which the water descends; (2) the *canal* or tunnel through which it flows; (3) the *kephalaria* (springs or heads) by which it reappears—the outfall.

The barathra which receive the Cephissus on its way to Larymnä, are great caverns at the foot of precipitous rocks, some 20, 50, or 80 feet in height. Their size may be estimated from the fact that the stream which enters one of them is 30 feet broad and 4 to 5 feet deep. Strange to say, these outlets do not always occur where we should expect to find them—*i.e.* where the shores are low—but often where the mountains are highest and rockiest, and where they project farthest into the lake. The barathra thus being above the level of the lake-plain, the water can only enter when it has reached a certain height. Hence, in the month of August or earlier, four only of the Copaic katabothra are active; several of them are quite empty, and may be inspected. During the Greek Revolution, these caverns served as temporary refuges for the women and children, until they could escape under cover of night to hiding-places more secure from the pursuit of the Turks (Forchhammer, *op. cit.*, pp. 159–172; Leake, *Northern Greece*, ii. p. 281; Fiedler, *op. cit.*, pp. 100–129; Bursian, *op. cit.*, pp. 195 *et seq.*).

How these mysterious, but most necessary, outlets were formed is still to a certain extent a matter of conjecture. The most probable hypothesis is, that the clefts are the results of earthquakes; and, given an opening, no matter how small, through which the water could penetrate, the formation of the tunnel is easily explained by the chemical action of the water on the soft calcareous rock, assisted by the mechanical friction of any particles loosened

<sup>1</sup> The Barathron at Athens was simply a pit, into which criminals were thrown.



but not dissolved by the stream, and carried along as sediment (Geikie, *op. cit.*, pp. 351, 357). If we imagine this process going on for ages, we can understand something of the way in which the wonderful subterranean labyrinths within the Greek mountains were hollowed out.

(c) *Reappearance of the Rivers: the Kephalaria*.—Tortuous labyrinths these underground passages are; so much so, that it is often difficult to trace the progress of a stream from its entrance into the barathron to its exit at the outfall. In the two cases already mentioned—the waters of Pheneus, which join the Ladon, and those of Copaïs, which discharge themselves into the Eubœan Sea—their course is clear, as in both cases a single mountain-ridge only is pierced through. It is supposed, however, that ultimately all the watery treasures of the shut-up basins of Eastern Arcadia, with but few exceptions, find their way by underground channels to the river Alpheius, either directly or indirectly, and are thus conveyed through Elis to the Sicilian Sea. A noble river is the Alpheius. Now diving into the heart of a mountain, now winding and twisting deftly, as though seeking to avoid the hill-dungeon, in a way which has gained for him his modern name “Sarantopotamos” (the Forty-river)—we are not surprised to find Alpheius the watery hero of Peloponnesus. It was even thought in antiquity that he continued his adventurous career beneath the sea itself, nor halted till he arrived at Syracuse in Sicily<sup>1</sup> (Bursian, ii. p. 288; Curtius, *Pel.*, ii. pp. 249, 274, note 34).

Perhaps the most curious instance of the dark underground journeyings of the Greek rivers is that of the little Arcadian Stympthalus, which pursues an independent course of its own, not west, but south-east. The Stympthalian plain is now occupied in its lowest part by a lake, formed by all the streams of the district, which have only *one* subterranean outlet. In antiquity, by means of dams (of which the remains are still to be seen) and probably of an artificial river-bed, the plain was drained, so that in summer no lake appeared, but simply one river, the Stympthalus, which, after a short, regulated course, disappeared (as the lake-waters do now) into the barathron at the western foot of Mt. Apelauron, to reappear—where, think you?—in Argolis, at the eastern foot of Mt. Chaon, as the river Erasinus, “the Lovely,” so called, doubtless, from the refreshing sight presented by the perpetual fulness of its rushing waters in that dry and thirsty land (Paus., viii. 22, 3; Bursian, ii. p. 195; Curtius, i. p. 201; ii. pp. 340, 364). This, at least, was (and is) the opinion held by the Greeks as to the source of the Erasinus, and there is no reason to doubt its correctness. The Erasinus pursues an open-air course from Chaon to the Argolic Gulf; but other Arcadian waters (supposed by the ancients to come from a little swampy plain in the territory of Mantinea)—after piercing their way through Artemisium, and finding open-air progress blocked by Mt. Zavitza, which bars the coast—flow on for more than 1000 feet beneath the sea, and then suddenly leap upwards from their dark prison-house in the shape of a whirlpool, with a column of water whose diameter is estimated at 50 feet—the wonderful sweet-water fountain of Deine (Bursian, ii. p. 68; Curtius, i. p. 245; ii. p. 373).<sup>2</sup> This curious phenomenon—fresh water springing out

<sup>1</sup> For the legend of Alpheius and the fountain nymph, Arethusa, with Shelley’s pretty version of the story, see *Hellas*, p. 215. Some writers derive the name “Sarantopotamos” from the many tributaries of the river (so Clark, *Pel.*, p. 152). An older name for Alpheius was *Nyktimos*, an allusion to his dark underground career. Alpheius was thus the *River of Night*, before he became the *Nourisher* (III).

<sup>2</sup> It is now considered more probable that Deine owes its origin to the barathron of Parthenium, with which it is in line (E. Curtius, *Pel.*, ii. 373). In calm weather, Deine shows its presence only by the arched heightening of the surface of the waters, and the concentric circles around.

of the salt waves—is met with also off the coast of Laconia, and in Northern Greece, in the Bay of Cheimerion, off the coast of Epeirus.

The foregoing brief sketch of the exceeding wealth of water possessed by certain parts of Greece, will enable us to understand better that co-operation of man which we emphasised in a previous section (p. 24) as a necessary preliminary to the cultivation of the soil. What could Nature do for man, so long as the soil lay under water? The essential condition, therefore, not only of tillage, but of life itself in such countries as Eastern Arcadia, is the regulating of the water. If the Hellene did not wish to see flocks and herds, houses and temples, swept away or submerged, the barathra must be kept clear and open, the mountain-streams directed towards them within confining bounds, flooding of the valley prevented by the erection of dams. Here, indeed, is a task for experimenters!—a task requiring the greatest watchfulness and endurance. So difficult did its beginnings, the first draining of the land, appear to the later Hellenes, that, looking back on the canals and such other works of their ancestors as are still to be traced in the plains of Pheneus and Stymphalus, they attributed them to supernatural help—the assistance of Heracles. Four out of the twelve labours of the doughty hero, indeed, may be interpreted in this way (Curtius, ii. p. 506).

(1) The slaying of the Nemean Lion is simply the regulating of the streams which pour down furiously from the mountains that shut in the narrow Nemean valley. Hemmed in between Mt. Apesas and the opposite projecting hills, they collect more quickly than the barathra can carry them off, and threaten destruction to man and beast. The cave in which the lion housed, with its two openings (by one of which the animal always slipped out) is, of course, the barathron with its entrance and its exit.<sup>1</sup>

(2) The destruction of the Lernaean Hydra—the great water-snake with poisonous breath and nine heads, which grew again as fast as they were cut off—is the effectual stopping-up or confining of the springs (*kephalaria*) which formed the swamp at the foot of Mt. Pontinus on the Arcadian frontier of Argolis, and which, as soon as they were repressed in one spot, forced their way through the soft moor soil at another. The poisonous breath of the monster is the miasma from the swamp (Preller, *op. cit.*, p. 193; Curtius, ii. pp. 340, 369).

(3) The subduing of the Erymanthean Boar—the fierce Arcadian mountain-stream, Erymanthus—is even a happier allegory, for the animal is not slain; it is simply taken captive, *i.e.* confined within bounds and made useful (Curtius, i. p. 388).

(4) The destruction of the Stymphalian Birds—monstrous creatures with brazen beaks and claws, that haunted the lake of Stymphalus, before the regulation of its waters, and lived on human flesh—is a vivid picture of the beneficent action of the sun's rays in dissipating the noxious vapours of an undrained soil (Paus., viii. 22, 3; Bursian, ii. p. 195; Curtius, i. p. 203).

All these achievements took place in Peloponnesus. When we repair to Northern Greece, we find precisely the same kind of actions attributed to the hero. Especially significant is the saga of his wrestling with the river Achelōus for the hand of Deianeira. The longest river of Greece, with a course of some 130 miles, Achelōus was a rival worthy of the Sun-hero. In antiquity, it was considered the ruler of all the fresh waters of Hellas, and accordingly we find Homer speaking of "King Achelōus" (*Iliad*, xxi. 194).

<sup>1</sup> The mountains of this district are perforated with caves—a fact to which two of them apparently owe their names—Tretus, "the Pierced," and Coelessa, "the Hollow" (Bursian, ii. p. 35; Curtius, *Pel.*, p. 468).



A noble river, it well merits the distinction, not only from its length, but from its depth and the volume of water with which it sweeps along to the sea. Even now, after its banks have been neglected for ages, it is navigable as far as the northern limit of the Acarnanian plain. The memory of its impetuous current, and of the many occasions on which it broke through all barriers and flooded the land, is preserved in the saga mentioned of the great struggle between the River-god and Heracles. Achelōus comes to woo the princess in three different forms—now as a bull, now as a winding serpent, now in human shape with the head of an ox. At sight of such a suitor the unfortunate Deianeira gives herself up for lost, when Heracles appears upon the scene as a rival claimant for her hand. The two heroes wrestle together, and, after a fearful conflict, Heracles succeeds in breaking off the little horn of his adversary, whereupon the mighty River-god owns himself vanquished, and offers in exchange the Horn of Amalthea (Horn of Plenty), which Heracles presents to Cœneus, the father of Deianeira, and wins the maiden for his bride (Soph., *Trach.* 9 *et seq.*; 494 *et seq.*; Preller, *op. cit.*, p. 243).

Now, the question for us is: Did the Greeks really believe in a personal conflict between the two superhuman heroes; or is this, like the fable of Typhon, a myth with a kernel? Let us hear how Strabo, the old geographer, interprets the story (c. 458; x. 19): Achelōus, he says, like other rivers was compared to a bull on account of its noises and the bends in its channel, which are called its horns; it was likened to a serpent because of its length and its windings; it was said to have an ox's head for the same reason that it was called bull-faced. Heracles, who was not only of a beneficent disposition, but was going to marry Cœneus' daughter, forcibly confined the errant current of the river by dams and dykes, and thus drained great part of the Paracheloitis (the Acarnanian-Ætolian plain) out of favour to Cœneus. "And this," adds Strabo, "is the Horn of Amalthea." In regard to the serpent-like windings of the river, Colonel Mure tells us that they are most extraordinary, sometimes taking the form of the letter S, at others that of C, or even that of a nearly perfect O (W. Mure, *Journal of a Tour in Greece*, i. p. 402). Each patch of ground enclosed between these meanderings, and thus liable to be flooded, became, when the river was confined within its banks, a source of wealth and abundance.

Here we have a perfectly intelligible, nay scientific, explanation of the myth, which is clearly a picture of the struggle, the "wrestling" of the first experimenters with Nature, before they had secured her co-operation and with it the Horn of Plenty.

The impress of this terrible struggle is very distinctly marked on the religion of Arcadia, a religion which stands out in many ways in such sharp contrast with the clear sunny myths of other parts of Greece that it is impossible to understand it without a reference to the nature of the country. This holds good more especially of the cult of Demeter, Earth-mother. In the beautiful Attic myth of the Mother and the Daughter, the consort of the Earth is (as is natural in that parched-up land) Zeus, god of the heaven and the rains. In the Arcadian version of the story, Earth is wedded to Poseidon, god not only of the floods but of the earthquake—here the beneficent agent to which the life-preserving barathra were supposed to owe their origin. The one version is, therefore, just as true to nature as the other. When we find, however, that in Arcadia Demeter is not only the mother of Persephone (Vegetation), but of the first horse, Areion, we are disposed at first to think that these old myth-makers had lost their wits, and to agree with Juvenal that the Arcadians were really no better than

simpletons. Again we pause, however, for we reflect that the myths came into existence at a period when the Arcadians were, probably, no whit behind the other Greeks in intelligence. We recollect, moreover, that it was precisely in Arcadia that, as Pausanias tells us (viii. 8, 1), he began to understand the myths. In this mysterious land he discovered that the fables of antiquity had a meaning, that wise men of old had spoken in riddles. What this hidden meaning was he kept to himself, but we can take the hint, and in the present case, at least, it is not difficult to see that the story of Demeter and the horse Areion is simply an allegorical representation of the intimate union of Earth and Water in the heart of the mountains, and the birth, a few hundred yards farther on, of a little leaping, dashing, galloping cascade. The horse, in the language of the myths, always denotes the waves. The favourite name for Poseidon, as ruler of the waves, among the Greeks was, as we know, Hippios, "the Horseman," and bridled horses were sacrificed to him by being sunk in the sea, at the sweet-water fountain, Deine in Argolis, already mentioned (Paus., viii. 7, 2).<sup>1</sup>

The significance of the first horse, therefore, as a river is evident, and becomes all the clearer when we learn that Areion was given to Heracles, and that he helped that hero in his war against Augeias, king of the Eleans in Elis. Areion, in this connection, can only be one of the tributaries of the Ladon, which united with the waters of the plain of Pheneus to flood the low lands of Elis; for it is from Pheneus that the expedition sets out (Paus., viii. 25, 7, 10; Curtius, *Pel.*, 372).

(d) *The Drying-up of the Rivers.*—No less noteworthy than the superabundance of water in some parts of Greece is the lack of it in others; a state of things also calling forth, although in different ways, the forethought and co-operation of man. In Argolis, Attica, Achaia, indeed, generally throughout Greece, the rivers are merely deeply furrowed torrent-beds, full during a few months of the year, empty gullies for the remainder. This is due mainly to the porous nature of the chalk-soil, which, as in "thirsty Argos," absorbs or greedily drinks in the water—a phenomenon, we may be sure, that did not pass without notice.

For the fulness of water Greek fancy invented, as we have seen, a variety of images. Water regulated, is the bridled horse or the tamed bull; water overflowing in disease-spreading swamp and fen, is the snake or flesh-devouring monster; water roaring and foaming down the mountain-side, sweeping all before it, is the bellowing bull, or the wild boar, or the ferocious lion.

No less fertile was early Greek imagination in devising reasons *why* the precious streams should dry up or disappear. Sometimes the cause is *hatred* or *revenge*, as in the story of the fifty daughters of Danaus, the nymphs of the Argolic springs. They have been forced against their will to wed their impetuous suitors, the fifty sons of Ægyptus, whom they forthwith proceed to murder, burying their heads in the Lernæan swamp. The fifty suitors are the stormy winter-torrents of Argolis, which die in summer because their nymph-brides have cut off their heads—*i.e.* dried up their springs, which have gone to supply the lurking-place of the Hydra with its inexhaustible fulness of water (Preller, *op. cit.*, ii. p. 47). For this deed the Danaïdes were punished in the Lower World by being condemned perpetually to draw water in vessels pierced with holes, a very appropriate reminder of the futility of their

<sup>1</sup> For the constant association of the horse with Poseidon, see under "Poseidon Hippios" in *Hellas*, p. 205.



attempt to rid themselves of their lords, who, of course, came to life again with each returning rainy season.<sup>1</sup>

Or the motive may be *indignation*, as in the case of the little Bœotian river, Helicon, in which (so Pausanias tells us) the Mænades desired to wash their bloodstained hands after tearing the unhappy Orpheus in pieces.<sup>2</sup> Determined not to give the wished-for cleansing, the river dived beneath the earth, to reappear as a coast-stream on the Corinthian Gulf (ix., 30, 8).

Or, again, the reason may be *fear*, as in the case of the Helisson, one of the rivers of Sicyon, which in summer is quite without flowing water. In it, according to the saga, the Furies had bathed, and so appalling was the vision of the swarthy, black-winged, fire-breathing Sisters with their writhing snake-locks that the little river disappeared to prevent a repetition of the unwished-for honour.<sup>3</sup>

Or, once more, the cause may be *disappointed love*, as in the case of the river Selemnus, in Achaia (Paus., viii. 23, 1; Curtius, i. pp. 405, 446). Selemnus was a beautiful youth who was loved by the sea-nymph Argyra (Silver-fount) so long as he continued beautiful. No sooner, however, did he begin (in the summer months) to lose his beauty and shrivel up than Argyra ceased to visit him (the river could no longer reach the sea), and finally withdrew her love from him. A truly Greek explanation, upon which the comment of most Greek youths and maidens would probably be: "And quite right, too! How can ugly people expect to be loved?" If the legend had arisen in the cold North, we should have had Argyra weeping an ocean of briny tears for the loss of Selemnus, ugly as he had become. The exaltation of the beautiful, however, is a deep-rooted feature of Greek nature, and bursts out, as in this little Märchen tale, in the most unexpected quarters.

Thus in grouping together some of the legends concerning the fountains and rivers of Greece, we are struck by the extremely human conceptions attributed to them, or, rather, to their representatives. Hatred and revenge, indignation, fear, disappointed love—these are motives which touch the deepest springs of human conduct, and show how the early Hellene esteemed the springs and rivers of his native land. Water, sparkling and refreshing, was to him as to Pindar (*Olymp.*, i. 1) the best of all good things, the quickener of mind as well as of body, for the Muses themselves were originally fountain-nymphs.<sup>4</sup>

(c) *Rivers as Land-Builders*.—One other peculiarity of the streams of this strange little land of contrasts must be mentioned. Not only are the rivers great destroyers, sweepers away of earth and arable land; they are also, by virtue of this very property, great land-formers. Bearing with them, in their impetuous course from the mountains, both stones and earth, they deposit in the sea a foundation which gradually rises above the sea-level, and then, by many successive layers of detritus as well as by the growth of vegetation, forms a plain, which, in its inner and higher portion, is altogether beyond the reach of the sea (Geikie, *op. cit.*, p. 388). In this way, through the slow course of the ages, were formed probably all the alluvial coast-lands of Greece: that of Argos, by the Inachus and other rivers; the "Macarian," or Blessed, plain of Messenia, by the Pamisus; the plain of Helos in Laconia, by the Eurotas; the low lands of Elis, by the rivers of Arcadia; the narrow coast-land on the north, by those of Achaia. These river-formed plains often take the shape of the Greek letter Δ, with the apex pointing inland and the base to the sea. Hence the name "delta," now usually applied to all such alluvial

<sup>1</sup> See *Hellas*, p. 287.

<sup>2</sup> For the story of Orpheus, see *Hellas*, p. 136.

<sup>3</sup> See *Hellas*, p. 291.

<sup>4</sup> See *Hellas*, p. 170.

land at the mouth of a river, and first given by the Greeks themselves to that of the Nile. Such deltas are best studied in Greece along the Achæan coast, which owes its contour to the accumulations brought down by the wild torrents of the land.

When we find the rivers of Hellas, therefore, figuring in the saga as national heroes and progenitors of races (*e.g.* the Inachus in Argos), this land-building property must be taken into account, for the alluvial soil so formed is amongst the richest and most productive in Greece. "King" Achelōus was the great land-builder in the eyes of the Greeks. Like some human heroes with a violent temper, he persistently strove to undo the effects of his furious actions by "making up" for them in other ways, and the formation of the great Acarnanian-Ætolian plain, the Parachelōitis, is apparently due in no small measure (perhaps entirely) to the detritus brought down by him in his stormy career from Mt. Lacmon southwards. We may be sure that his activity did not escape the observation of the Greeks. It is noticed by Herodotus, Thucydides, and others among the old writers; and in earlier days it plays its part in the saga of Alcæon, the son of Amphiarus the Seer. Like Orestes, Alcæon has taken the life of his mother, in order to avenge his father's death, and is consequently pursued by the Furies. He wanders from place to place until the oracle reveals that there can be no rest for him, until he finds it in a land upon which the sun had not shone when the terrible deed was committed. This land he at length discovers in the alluvial new-formed plain at the mouth of the Achelōus. Here accordingly, not far from Cœniadæ, Alcæon settles, calling the land around, after his son Acarnan, "Acarnania." So, according to Thucydides, ran the old tradition about Alcæon (ii. 102; Paus., viii. 24, 8, 9).<sup>1</sup>

(d) *Formation of Grottoes.*—Not content with building up plains, piercing mountain-sides, and making subterranean channels, the energy of the Greek rivers has also expended itself upon excavating glittering caverns, the homes and haunts of the Nymphs, who, in Greek fancy, sit weaving the green mantle of earth.<sup>2</sup> The Greek hills abound in such caves and grottoes, the formation of which, like that of the peak caverns of Derbyshire, is due to the permeating influence of water. Such caves were dedicated to the Nymphs and Pan, the Shepherd-god, and, accordingly, when the Athenians introduced the cult of the latter into their city, in gratitude for his supposed services at the battle of Marathon,<sup>3</sup> they gave him a congenial sanctuary in a grotto at the foot of the Acropolis-rock.

The stalactites by which the hand of nature has adorned these grottoes take the most varied and grotesque shapes, suggesting all manner of fanciful thoughts and ideas—perhaps, in most cases, those in which originated the legend connected with the grotto. Thus, Ernst Curtius tells us of the stalactites in the Ox-hollow at Pylus—the scene, according to the local tradition, of the slaughtering of the oxen by the babe Hermes—that here they do not

<sup>1</sup> To the ancients, this land-forming activity of the Achelōus appeared much greater than, at least in historic times, it has really proved itself. For instance, Herodotus believed that half of the Echinades (see *Hellas*, p. 11)—a group of islands lying close to the mouth of the river—had become connected with the mainland by means of the agglomeration of soil brought down by the Achelōus; and Thucydides anticipated that all would ultimately be so joined (ii. 10; Thucyd., ii. 102; Strabo, p. 458). He explains that the river could not escape to the sea directly, because these islands do not lie in a straight line; hence, in its winding course the earth is kept back between them. During the last 2000 years, however—judging from the measurement which Strabo gives of the distance of Cœniadæ from the sea—the coast has undergone little change. This may, however, be due to a deepening of the sea-bed.

<sup>2</sup> See *Hellas*, p. 226.

<sup>3</sup> See *Hellas*, p. 250.



form, as usual, free masses, but have been deposited on the walls in flat strips, eminently suggestive of *spread-out skins* (*Pel.*, ii. p. 177).

By far the most famous of the grottoes of Hellas, however, is the great Corycian Cave, in the highlands of Parnassus, above Delphi. This was sacred to Dionysus, Pan, and the Nymphs (*Soph.*, *Antig.*, 1126; *Æsch.*, *Eum.*, 22). The interior, which is 200 feet long, nearly 200 feet broad, and 40 feet high in the middle, is described as a "truly magnificent specimen of natural vaulting—a natural cathedral," adorned by colossal stalactites, formed by the dropping water. The large hall leads into another, 100 feet in length.<sup>1</sup> Both must have afforded ample space for the Delphians, who took refuge here from the Persians, as David and his men hid themselves from Saul—space not only for their treasures, but their families.

Of the effect which such scenes must have had upon the imagination of the early Hellene, we can form some faint idea: "If any one doubted the influence which natural objects had exercised over Greek religion," says an eloquent writer (Dean Stanley, *Art. "Greek Topography" in the Classical Museum*, i. p. 69), "no more convincing answer could be given than by the sight of the fantastic white rocks and grotesque fir-trees on the approach to the cave, the wild and lonely character of the hills in which it is situated, and the stalactite figures, which, when dimly seen in the gloom of its long recesses, could hardly fail to suggest to the active imagination of Greek shepherds the vision of the mountain god with his attendant nymphs and satyrs."

(e) *The Styx*.—That Greece is not without a grand instance of water in one of its most awe-striking forms is proved by the existence of the Styx, the famous waterfall in the north of Arcadia, below the highest peak of Aroanius (Chelmos). It is impossible to picture a more desolate region than this of the Styx. All life seems extinct; nothing is to be seen but jagged mountain-peaks, with the torrent pouring down over a precipice 220 feet in height through a labyrinth of rocks, giving to all that it touches the dark hue which, perhaps, has won for it its modern name of Mauronero, or Black Water.

The Styx, as we know, was a great power in Greek mythology. By it the gods took their solemn oaths, and to it in historic times (500 B.C.), Cleomenes wished to lead the chiefs of the Arcadian cities when about to form a league. This ceremony was probably proposed as the revival of an ancient custom, and if we accept this supposition, it explains the otherwise inscrutable fable of Styx and her children. According to Hesiod, in the War of the Gods, Styx (who is a daughter of Oceanus) is the first of the immortals to go over to the side of Zeus. Why Hesiod should have put forward Styx as the representative of Fidelity, becomes apparent if we imagine this weird and lonely waterfall as the centre of an Arcadian league, or warlike confederacy—the spot where chieftains and people were wont to meet to swear truth and loyalty to one another and the common cause. Read in this light, the allegory, as pointed out by Curtius,<sup>2</sup> is replete with beautiful meaning, for Styx is wedded to Pallas, the wielder of the lance, *i.e.* to Valour, and the children of Valour united to Fidelity are Zeal, Strength, Force, and Victory; all of which powers give up the cause of Chaos, and range themselves on the side of Zeus—Wisdom, Light, and Order.

<sup>1</sup> So Leake (*Northern Greece*, ii. p. 580). Tozer (*Lect. on Geog. of Greece*, p. 115) gives the entire length as 330 feet.

<sup>2</sup> See *Hellas*, p. 289; [Paus., viii. 17, 18; Herodotus, vi. 74; Curtius, *Pel.*, i. pp. 163, 195. Whether the waterfall now described as the Styx is the Styx of Homer, of Hesiod, and of Herodotus is a point which has been debated (see Clark, *Pel.*, p. 301). The explanation given in the text offers a very reasonable solution of a puzzling myth.

To sum up now the various wonder-sights which met the eyes of the Hellenes:—when we find amongst them fire-breathing mountains—lands rising from the sea amidst smoke and flame—lands and fragments of the coast disappearing and leaving no trace behind—lands rent from the mainland by internal forces—mountains cleft in twain by the same means—rivers destroying and rivers building-up—rivers piercing the mountain-sides—plains transformed into lakes, and lakes into plains—hot-springs bubbling up through the earth, sweet-water springs amid the salt waves—(to say nothing of the thousand and one wonders, which space has compelled us to omit, of the sea itself)—when we find all these striking phenomena gathered together in this one little land, can we be surprised at that yet stranger phenomenon, the early development, the extraordinary acceleration (so to speak), of thought among the Greeks as compared with the progress of the other Aryan peoples who are supposed to have left the Old Home before or with them? Each phenomenon was a goad and a spur in early days to mental activity, for each one presented a riddle which required an answer, each one roused the desire to know more about itself and about things in general. In this respect too, then—stimulation of thought and inquiry—Hellas was emphatically a land for experimenters.

“Nay!” objects a practical reader, “such an argument is one-sided. In what possible way can you prove that such phenomena as earthquakes and floods were in their rightful place in a land of experimenters? Had I been designing the land, most assuredly I should have taken care to guard against such disturbers of the peace.”

No doubt you would have done so—and this possibly would have been the object of any designer among mortals; but no such short-sighted policy watched over the destiny of the Hellenes. It seems to be the rule of life in every age and in every land, that the few must suffer for the many, and Hellas is no exception to the rule. Viewed in this light, we can see that there was not one amongst the phenomena noted which did not serve a purpose. We must always bear in mind the real meaning of the term “Experimenting.” If the experiments to which we refer had been such as, say, the standardising of instruments in a laboratory—then, we admit, the presence of such phenomena as earthquakes and floods would have been decidedly out of place. But if what we mean by experimenting is the working-out of that grandest of all results, the formation of *character*—and that, not of an individual, but of an agglomeration of individuals, a Nation—then we think it possible to prove, on four very good grounds, that all the natural features of Hellas served a purpose, and a beneficent purpose.

(1) The first link in this fourfold chain is the *intellectual link*—the creating of the desire to know. That the natural phenomena of Greece had this effect may, we think, be taken as proved, even by the short *résumé* given in the preceding pages. Not a vanishing river, not an island fragment, that did not set some one speculating as to the “reason why.” Naturally, in early ages such speculations take the form of myth and saga. Even in this form, however, they are not to be despised. Apart from any happy guesses at truth which they may contain, the wealth of imagination stored up in the Greek myths, the varied and ever-fresh forms in which the same idea is clothed, are simply marvellous. Then in later days, when men began to approach Nature in what we call the “scientific” spirit, it is still the same phenomena that exercise the minds of thinkers. Especially do the mysterious forces at work in the earthquake receive attention. Historians like Thucydides, philosophers like Aristotle—each has his own theory. And in regard to the most terrible catastrophe on record—the disappearance of Helice—this event gave an



unheard-of impetus to the study of natural science, for Diodorus (xv. 48, 3-4; cf. Curtius, i. p. 45) tells us expressly that by reason of the very magnitude of the calamity, thinkers made strict investigations (*peiróntai* = tested and proved, made experiments) into its probable physical causes.

(2) The second link in the chain is what we may call the *technical link*—the causes which spurred on the Greeks to develop their systems of irrigation, of engineering, of architecture. We do not pity the Dutch of to-day because they are compelled constantly to be on the alert against their enemy, the sea, when we observe the ingenious way in which they continue to hold their own by means of their grand system of dykes. Then why should we pity the Arcadians on account of floods, which, disastrous and unpreventable (apparently) as they sometimes were, could yet, as a rule, be averted by a good system of drainage? That the Arcadians were able to cope with the enemy is evident even now from a study of the valley of Stymphalus: "When we look at the whole district, with its ineffaceable traces of earlier habitation," says an eye-witness, E. Curtius (*Pel.*, i. p. 205), "we stand amazed at the comfortable way (*Behaglichkeit*) in which the ancients ensconced themselves in the midst of their weird, inhospitable valley, and even conclude from this how well they contrived to overcome the natural evils of their position." The Arcadians, then, in this respect can dispense with our pity. As to the rest, their climate made them hardy and robust—the god of medicine, Aesclepius himself, was represented among the Arcadians as a blooming youth—while the constant living in the presence of danger developed in them the intrepid, fearless spirit characteristic of the inhabitants of mountain regions. The Arcadians were the Switzers of antiquity.

In regard to the still more formidable earthquake—a power with which no human force may cope—even the dread of this appears to have helped on experimenting. Such, at least, was the opinion of a thoughtful observer, Colonel Leake, who suggests that the constant liability of Peloponnesus to slight shocks may have been one of the causes which led to the development of the massive style and solidity of Doric architecture (Leake, *Northern Greece*, iv. p. 551).

(3) Our third, or *ethical link*, is one which many readers will doubtless have anticipated. In days when as yet there was no objective standard of right and wrong, when might was right, and *Faustrecht* held sway in certain sections of society, was there no benefit to the world at large, think you, from the terrible local calamities which we have been considering? One of the social experiments tried in antiquity on the largest scale, and defended à outrance by philosophers, was that of slavery. In Corinth alone the number of slaves was estimated at 640,000<sup>1</sup>; in Athens, at 400,000. Add to these the slaves of the other Hellenic communities and we arrive at a gigantic total of defenceless, "will-less chattels," as Aristotle would have called them, held at the absolute disposal of willful, all but irresponsible masters. If, into connection with this condition of things, we bring the statement of Thucydides that the great Laconian earthquake, and the fall of the peak of Taygetus, were regarded as a punishment sent upon the Spartans for the slaying of certain suppliant helots (serfs) at Tænarum, we can see that these events were calculated to rouse very curious feelings in the minds of the freemen of Greece. "Have a care!" said the "judgment" to every despot in public or in private life, whether he would hear or whether he would forbear; "the eye of your Master is upon you. Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

<sup>1</sup> This number probably includes the slaves employed in the trading settlements of the Corinthians (cf. Bursian, ii., p. 13, note 2).

Awful, therefore, as was a catastrophe which, without a moment's warning, deprived 20,000 Spartans of life, the making of life bearable to the hundreds of thousands of "will-less" souls in the other scale far outweighs it in significance. So long as the terrible event was held in remembrance, the slave, the suppliant, the prisoner of war, women, the aged—all the weak and down-trodden—would have, we may be sure, some measure of justice meted out to them. By this conclusion we are "reading in" to the event no lesson which was not drawn from similar occurrences by the Hellenes themselves.<sup>1</sup> This we shall be able to prove shortly when we come to consider their ideas on the subjects of justice and retribution. Here we can but note in passing that such catastrophes seem to have formed a necessary part of the education of man.

(4) The fourth link in the chain is the strongest of all, *the link of religion*. The seeking of God was, in St. Paul's view, *the mission* of the Greeks, and it was therefore necessary that they should have the opportunity of seeking Him in every possible way. We all recollect the episode in the life of the Hebrew prophet, who for the moment had lost faith and trust in God. He retires to Horeb, and the manifestations of the Divine Power pass before him; the great and mighty wind, the earthquake, the fire. The prophet has been long trained in the divine school; he estimates these phenomena at their true value and remains unmoved. It is not till he hears the still small voice that he recognises the presence of God and his own nothingness, and covers his face with his mantle. Precisely the same experience had to be made by the Aryan thinker. The wind and the earthquake and the fire had to pass before him, and of each he had to ask himself—"Is *this* God?" Whether the Greeks ever attained to the recognition of the still small voice is a question of questions, to which we shall, perhaps, be able to find an answer when we come to consider the greatest of all Hellenic experiments, that Seeking after God, which we call their "religion." Meantime, let us note that, on this ground alone, it was necessary that all the phenomena of God's working in nature should pass before the Hellene, the awe-striking manifestations of His power as well as the gentler evidences of His providence.

"I report as a man may of God's work—all's love, yet all's law."

In no way did the All-Father leave Himself without witness in Hellas.

## BEAUTY

Finally, there is one other question which we have to ask, and it is a very important one. Many of the experiments made by the Hellenes were in the domain of the beautiful, and we therefore find ourselves speculating as to whether the land were calculated to help them in this respect; to rouse within them the idea of beauty, or not.

"Can there be a doubt about it?" says the reader; "Hellas has both the mountains and sea, and when you have said this, you have said all."

True! That Hellas is a land of beauty, follows necessarily upon what has been already said. In her scenery, as in the conditions of the soil and climate, the law of contrasts, before referred to, holds good. Taking into account her

<sup>1</sup> Thus, from the fate of Helice, Pausanias draws the inference (vii. 25, 1) that the god of suppliants is not to be evaded. By the "god of suppliants" (ἱκεῖος) he means, not the minor god, Poseidon, but Zeus, *the* god of the Greeks.



size, Greece possesses the most varied landscape in Europe.<sup>1</sup> Monotony is impossible where the sea, running far up into the land, presents itself restlessly in unexpected quarters. Overhead, the sky offers the constant charm of mountain-lands, alternate sunshine and swiftly-passing cloud registering their changeful effects upon the hills around. Vegetation, also, obeys the general law. In place of the sombre uniformity of northern fir-topped hills, or the gorgeous iteration of the tropical forest, we have in Greece every variety of tree and shrub, from the oaks of Acarnania and the beeches of Pindus to the palms of Boeotia and the orange-trees of Messenia. If, on the one hand, we have nature in her sterner moods, Taygetus, with his torrent-ploughed gullies, his deep gorges and abrupt precipices, his lofty jagged peaks, covered with snow during the greater part of the year, we have, on the other, in familiar sights and sounds, a constant succession of beautiful images. Pelion, "quivering with foliage," its grassy sides gleaming with bright-leaved, brighter-fruited pomegranates; the clustering vines of Eubœa; the fig-trees of Messenia; the dark olive-groves of Attica, their silvery patriarchs sending forth winding roots in all directions; the cool rills of Helicon;

"The flowery hill, Hymettus, with the sound  
Of bees' industrious murmur;"

the rush of mountain-streams, almost hidden in the spring-time by overhanging shade of myrtle, oleander, and laburnum, beneath whose blossomed boughs the goats take shelter from the noontide sun; the warbling of nightingales, invisible in their leafy coverts; the measured beat of the waves upon the rock-bound coast—these and innumerable other scenes and sounds prove that Hellas has still much to charm both eye and ear.<sup>2</sup>

Much of the foregoing description, however, would be equally applicable to other countries, and if we would learn the great characteristic of the beauty of Greece, we must again fall back upon the two features which proved so momentous in the history of the land—the sea and the mountains.

The unifying element in the development of the Greeks, the sea, is no less the unifying element in their landscape. The countless lonely valleys of Greece, her projecting peninsulas, her innumerable islands, great and small, isolated or in groups—all these disjointed limbs and scattered fragments of the land are blended together into one great and perfect whole by the blue sky above, and the glorious blue sea beneath. With its deep azure waters—waters blue as lapis-lazuli—its foam-crested waves, its dolphins sporting in the sunshine, the Ægean Sea forms the essential background to every true picture of Hellas (K. Woermann, *op. cit.*, p. 83; *Kunst und Naturskizzen*, pp. 144–145).

Then the mountains!—how shall we do justice to the wondrous variety of character—we use the word advisedly—which each displays? Beginning with

<sup>1</sup> "If a man is fond of the large effects of natural scenery, he will find in the Southern Alps and fiords of Greece a variety and a richness of colour which no other part of Europe affords. If he is fond of the details of natural scenery, flowers, shrubs, and trees, he will find the wild-flowers and flowering-trees of Greece more splendid than anything he has yet seen" (Mahaffy: *Rambles and Studies in Greece*, Pref., p. viii. 3rd ed.).

<sup>2</sup> Among the "sounds that charm," the Athenians would certainly have included one which, to our ears, hardly comes under that category, viz., the chirping of the tettix, cicada or grasshopper. Far from being annoyed, however, at the monotonous crick-crick of their dearly-loved Fatherkins (*Väterchen*, so Bergk interprets the word, *op. cit.*, i. p. 128, note 208), it reminded them of their autochthonous origin, that they themselves had sprung, like the gods, from Mother Earth; a supposed fact of which they were not a little proud: witness the golden grasshoppers wherewith they adorned their hair (see *Hellas*, p. 194). Accordingly, in Plato's famous description of the plane-tree by the Ilissus, the chirruping of the grasshoppers figures, as we have seen, among the sweet "summer sounds and scents" that filled the air.

the giants, we might say with equal truth of Olympus, of Parnassus, of Taygetus, that it is "majestic." And yet, each calls up before the mind a distinctly different picture, the majesty of which is all its own. Each, however, assumes a different aspect in Greek fancy, and plays a different part in Greek history. OLYMPUS, with its snowy precipices, towering to their full height of nearly 10,000 feet, and its huge buttresses, "many-folded," "divided again and again into minor ridges and valleys, thickly clothed with feathery woods" (Tozer, *Researches in the Highlands of Turkey*, ii. p. 5 *et seq.*)—impressing us both by its soaring grandeur and by its magnificent breadth—became the home of the national gods of Hellas. PARNASSUS, its summits enveloped "in rolling billows of cloud," overawes us by its mysteriousness no less than by its immense mass, and in its bosom lay Delphi—according to the Greeks the central point of Hellas,—the centre, at least, for ages, of the religion of Hellas. TAYGETUS, stretching its mighty crags in one unbroken line from Arcadia to the sea, a distance of 70 miles, strikes the imagination mostly by its strength; and at its feet, protected as by a bulwark, lay Sparta, the home of those whose boast it was that their "walls" were their "*men*."

And turning from the monarchs of the land, what diversity meets us among the "rank and file" of the Greek hills!—Now they are forest-clad, their sides furrowed by many a silver streak, marking in winter the path of a foaming torrent, in summer its empty white-bleached bed, rosy with the glow of the oleanders that fringe its banks.<sup>1</sup> Now they are bald and naked, broken into a succession of marble peaks—clear-cut, dignified, and "aristocratic"—or crumbled and fashioned by the storms of the ages into the most fantastic shapes—each one glittering in the transparent atmosphere with all the changeful hues of the sunlight.

To this clearness of the atmosphere of Greece, much of the witchery of the scenery is due. Take, for instance, Mr. Symonds' brilliant word-painting of the hills around Athens, where, as we know, the air is specially pure and transparent:—"At dawn and sunset," he says, "the rocks array themselves with a celestial robe of rainbow-woven hues: islands, sea, and mountains, far and near, burn with saffron, violet, and rose, with the tints of beryl and topaz, sapphire and almandine, and amethyst" (J. A. Symonds, *Sketches in Italy and Greece*, p. 192, 2nd ed.)—tints that no doubt gained for the city her beautiful name of *iostephanos*, "the violet-crowned."<sup>2</sup>

Poets and travellers have exhausted their imagination and their vocabulary in the effort to make stayers-at-home understand the fascination of the Greek mountains. To Gray's mind they were "inspiration-breathing"; to Colonel Mure their beauty was best expressed by the word which we have already used, "aristocratic"; to Thackeray the "chorus of hills," standing round about the scene of heroic deeds, spoke a language of its own. Most of all, however, do we feel the charm of the mountains in that little touch of Edward Lear—poet as well as painter—wherein he speaks of the faint blue hills, of exquisite shapes, the *last link in the landscape betwixt heaven and earth* (*Journal of a Landscape Painter in Albania*, p. 37).

To get among the mountains, however, is dangerous ground, for writers as well as for climbers—they exercise a too-powerful fascination. Nevertheless,

<sup>1</sup> The rhododaphne, or rose-laurel, with its lovely blossoms and shining leaves, now one of the most common (as it is one of the most beautiful) shrubs of Greece, is also one of those which we must omit from any picture of ancient Greece. It is not mentioned by any writer of classical antiquity, and according to Hehn (p. 358 *et seq.*) was probably introduced into the country between the time of Theophrastus and the last days of the Roman Republic.

<sup>2</sup> For Dean Stanley's no less beautiful description of an Athenian sunset, see *Hellas*, p. 18.



before quitting them finally, let us just glance for a moment at one of the magnificent prospects to be enjoyed from their summits. Passing over the tempting heights of Pelion, of Parnassus, of Lycabettus, of Sicyon, of Acrocorinthus—all offering far-reaching views which have repeatedly drawn forth glowing descriptions—we select one, less widely known, perhaps, but presenting all the salient features of a typical Greek landscape, the panorama which unfolds itself beneath the hills of Trœzen.

At the foot of the citadel-rock stretches a fertile plain, richly wooded and thickly planted with luxuriant vines, sinking gently towards two bays. In the midst, between these bays, rises the mountain isthmus of Dara—hill pressing closely upon hill, and culminating in the broad series of bold rocky peaks constituting the volcanic mountain of Methana, one of the most strongly marked points along the Greek coast. To the left of Methana is the sea of Epidauros, beyond it are the famous Scironian Rocks of the Corinthian Isthmus, and over these in the distance rises the great round head of Parnassus. To the right is the island of Ægina, whilst as a background stretches the coast of Attica, in all its length, to Cape Sunium. Close to the mainland is seen the famous island of Calauria, surrounded by the sea. Imagine this picture now, in all its fulness of mountain, plain, coast, and islands, as it lies in glorious sunshine beneath the deep blue sky, embraced and permeated, as it were, by the rippling, glancing, sparkling sea, and we can form some idea, not only of the joyousness of the scene, but of its wondrous harmony. As E. Curtius, to whom we owe the foregoing description, justly says: "We have here one of the most magnificent views in Greece—a picture endless in its variety, yet ordered and arranged into one clearly-defined whole. That the early Hellenes themselves were by no means insensible to the charm of the scene, may be inferred from the name which the local saga gives to the daughter of the hero Trœzen: Euôpis = 'Fair-face'" (Curtius, *Pel.*, ii. p. 431 *et seq.*).

In her deep blue seas, then, her glittering mountain-peaks, her pure, transparent atmosphere, her island-fragments, and her picturesquely broken contour, Hellas possesses elements of beauty which are unchangeable. Far different is it, however, when we come to earth's surface. As we have seen (p. 42), the beauty of Greece as a cultivated land—the peaceful beauty of homestead and of orchards, of olive-grove, and terraced vineyard—is no longer what it was. Even her wild natural loveliness, the loveliness of woods and forests, has suffered cruelly at the hands of man. Enough remains, however, to charm and delight; but before proceeding to feast our eyes upon the sylvan beauty of Greece, we must once more emphasise the fact to which we have already called attention, viz., that Hellas wears on her eastern side an aspect very different from that which she presents on the west. At no time, probably, could the brilliant, sunny (often burnt-up) east have vied, as regards her forests, with the moister, greener west.<sup>1</sup>

The planting of the olive-wood of the Céphissus valley of Athens was itself an experiment, for up to the age of Peisistratus, Attica, we are told, was bare and treeless. In Plato's days, the Athenian hills had already become bald and skeletonised (Dio Chrysostom, *Or.*, xxv. p. 281 c; Plato, *Crit.*, 4). That there must have been a time, however, when Hellas abounded in scenes of the richest and wildest forest-beauty, is abundantly proved by the myths. The Nymphs who sit weaving in secret grottoes the green mantle of earth, the

<sup>1</sup> The contrast between the two sides of Greece has been forcibly described by M. Heuzey. After leaving Delphi and the east, he remarks that by his eyes, so long accustomed to naked rocks and brilliant sunshine, were as if "surprised" by the vegetation and the living verdure of Acarnania and the west (*Le Mont Olympe et l'Acarnanie*, p. 223).

Dryads and Hamadryads who have their homes in the trees, the lurking Satyrs of Greek fancy, are the direct personifications of forest life. No one has appreciated this more than our own Wordsworth.<sup>1</sup> The forest scenery of certain parts, moreover, and that on the eastern side of Greece, is still exquisite, and affords, for instance, an idea of Helicon as it must have been in the days when, to Greek imagination, its sunny glades were the fitting haunts of the Nine Sisters. To a lover of nature, what an enchanting picture is that sketched by Sir Thomas Wyse of the woodlands of EUBŒA (*Impressions of Greece*, p. 247 *et seq.*); their great forest-ranges of every kind of timber-tree produced by Greece—pines, valonia, firs—mingling with the magnificent foliage of planes and all oriental forms; their slopes, breaks, deep nymph-like dells, opening into glens, clad with ilex and other evergreens, and here and there sparkling with rivulets. How exhilarating is the breeze that wings its way in at every opening in the forest! What glorious gleams flash in upon the traveller through the fir-trees, the deep blue sea beyond, with its framework of grand promontories and rugged islands, glimmering in amethyst haze in the vapours of the morning! Within, as the day wears on, how delightful is the intense shade, broken here and there by strong rays of light revealing the infinite variety of foliage that forms the canopy overhead, “the gaunt half-shattered pines that still sturdily hold their own,” and now and again block the onward course; the luxuriant undergrowth of “shrubby, brush-wood, glimmering bay, lofty, red-stemmed arbutus, and sharp myrtle, and bushy lentisk, and the red clusters of pomegranates, and the pale agnus-castus, and such clumps and scatterings of flowers at their feet, yellow, blue, white, blossoming like snow-flakes over the moss, or running up the wild branches amongst those thousands of trees, so joyous, and festal, and superabundant!” Here, at least, we feel ourselves in the presence of “an exuberant and free-giving nature, from which nothing looks as though extorted.”

ACARNANIA is a district on the western mainland which has preserved its forests better than most parts of Greece, and we owe some descriptions of its scenery—none the less charming because somewhat paler than Sir Thomas Wyse’s glowing picture—to the pen of Colonel Leake (*Northern Greece*, i. p. 164; iv. 19). Of all explorers the best, most modest, most thorough, Colonel Leake is not the man to wax sentimental on any subject whatsoever, and yet it is precisely he who tells us of this little known district—“Acarnania’s forest wide”—of its mountain-slopes clothed by oaks, the finest in Greece, festooned thick with clustering wild vines, and peopled by nightingales singing in the deep shade; of the aromatic shrubs that make the air fragrant with the incense of nature; of the torrents overhung by plane-trees; of the glimpses obtained every now and again of the sea, never very far off in any part of Greece; the lovely Ambracian Gulf, lighted up by the clearest of skies.<sup>2</sup>

Acarnania, however, beautiful as it appears to us of the grey North, was to the Hellenes themselves but a wild, cheerless, outlying district. Let us, therefore, betake ourselves to the regions of the sunny south.

Wending our way into the heart of Peloponnesus, we find ourselves with another traveller (W. G. Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 155 *et seq.*) in the Pass leading from

<sup>1</sup> See *Hellas*, p. 251.

<sup>2</sup> It is Colonel Leake, also, who tells us that in his time on the mountain pastures in every part of Greece the shepherds might still be heard, as described by Theocritus, pouring forth a wild melodious strain from their pipes amid the murmuring of waters and the whispering of the wind through the pine-trees; and he goes on to express his surprise that the aromatic scent of the pines in summer should not have been observed by Theocritus, since the poet notes the whispering sound referred to (*Id.*, i. 1). The prince of explorers, then, had after all a keen sense of the beautiful in nature as well as a keen eye for an old ruin!



the north into a certain pleasant, hollow vale. Behind us is winter, before us the brightness of spring. "Now the branches interlacing seem to bar the way, now the thicket opens and leaves a green glade all blazing with scarlet anemones, while the winding path is recessed into many a shady covert starred with shy woodland flowers, on which the dew lies till noon. A jubilant clamour of singing birds—nightingale, thrush, linnet, mixed with notes that are unfamiliar—rings around us on all sides. All sights and sounds remind us that we are in the prime of 'scarlet-blossomed spring.'" At length we attain the summit of the Pass, and begin by winding paths to descend its western side. Suddenly, in place of the "dainty *vignettes*," forest-glade, and alley to which our eye has been accustomed, there opens up a wide prospect, a panorama hardly to be surpassed in grandeur. Before us stands a giant mountain, stretching like a Titanic wall flanked with buttresses, in one mighty line far as the eye can reach. His hoary head is white with snow, but his slopes and the hollows between are clothed by a rare verdure. At his feet lies a magnificent plain bathed in the sunlight, rich with forest and fruit-trees, with olive and vine, its brilliant green broken only here and there by red scars, the crumbling earth-banks between which, like a silver streak, a river is seen speeding its way through the vale into the distance beyond. Where are we? we ask in wonder. Were Theognis, the exile, by our side, we should have the prompt reply:

"By the sunny wave and winding edge  
Of fair Eurotas with its reedy sedge,  
Where Sparta stood in simple majesty."

—(*Theog. Gnom.*, 783; Frere's trans., p. 106).

"What!" says the reader, "this delightful spot the home of the stern Spartans—those grim warriors, those men of blood and iron, who banished from their lives all softness, all delight?"

Precisely. The lot of these "grim warriors" was cast in a wondrously pleasant place—the beautiful, bountiful, blossom-crowned vale of Lacedæmon; and our amazement at the austerity, or, as you are pleased to call it, the "grimness," of the social experiment which they worked out, abates not a little when we see with our eyes the sweetness and the softness of its surroundings.<sup>1</sup> At this day, as in the days of Homer, the plain of Sparta spreads itself out beneath the mountain-wall of Taygetus so joyously, so brightly, that hardly can the delighted traveller restrain the burst of enthusiasm which it inspires (Mure, *op. cit.*, ii., p. 220; Wyse, *Exc. in Pel.*, ii., p. 70; Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 156).

But time presses, and we hasten onwards and westwards. Our way lies again through "a well-wooded ravine where the thick trees are festooned with luxuriant ivy and wild-vine, and the babbling of the stream is mingled with the thick-warbled notes of innumerable nightingales." A few hours' ride brings us to Trypi, at the very mouth of the great Pass through Taygetus; the Pass of Langada, the most splendid defile of Greece. Leaving behind us the orchards, vineyards, and olive-groves of this beautiful little village, and entering the gorge, which grows narrower and still more narrow as we proceed, we climb the rugged path between lofty walls of rock and steeply falling torrent-beds, through the different zones of the mountain. Now we pass through a belt of fruit and forest trees, and little villages, and cornfields; now the scene grows wilder—"high above us, as it were, looking down from the summits,

<sup>1</sup> "During all the many rides I have taken through Greece, no valley ever struck me with the sense of peace and wealth so much as that of Sparta" (Mahaffy, *Rambles, &c.*, p. 385).

are great forests of fir-trees—a gloomy setting to a grandiose and savage landscape.” Yet even here, amid boulders and cliffs, in this bright spring-time, are flowers—pale anemones, irises, orchids, violets, and, where a stream trickles down, primroses. Higher still! On we press through the gloomy region of firs, and find, above them still, green alpine meadows with springs of wondrously pure and sparkling water, over which rise the bare rocky peaks of the mountain. “At last we reach the top of the Pass, about 4000 feet high, marked by a little chapel to St. Elias, and once by a stone pillar stating the boundary between Sparta and Messene. It was, then, up this Pass and among these forests that the young Spartans had steeled themselves by hunting the wolf and the bear in peace, and by raids and surprises in days of war.” Now we begin to descend the terrace-like slopes which form the western side of Taygetus, but have not proceeded far when the cry is raised, “Thálatta! thálatta!” “The sea! the sea.” And like a glad surprise flashes before us a glittering gulf with its framework of mountains, whilst at our feet lies another magnificent plain, its green-edged river winding through it like a dark ribbon.

The descent accomplished, the way begins to lead through high hedges of fig and gigantic cactus, “the air is moist and warm, like the air of a hot-house, and heavy with the scent of orange and lemon-flowers,” and we need no seer to announce that we have arrived in Macaria, the “Blessed” Plain of MESSENIA—that beautiful land, whose very beauty and fertility proved its ruin (Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 187; Bursian, *op. cit.*, ii. p. 104; Mahaffy, *op. cit.*, p. 386; Wyse, *Ecc.*, i. p. 188; Böetticher, *Auf Griechische Landstrasse*).

But the Messenian sun is too powerful for northern constitutions. Onward again! we dive into the shade of overhanging woods, rich in varied green, dashed with the bright pink of the Judas-tree; and then, wending our way northwards—once more with our old friend, Sir Thomas Wyse—we find ourselves on the way from Bassæ to Audritzena (*Ecc.*, ii. p. 40).

The scenes through which we pass remind us at every step that Hellas is not one but many countries. From a region of desolation, of harsh gnarled oaks and savage pines, we finally glide into one of great beauty—“the ideal of an ARCADIAN landscape. A series of gentle eminences, sweeping into soft, secluded valleys, wooded in the richest manner, with every variety of southern shrub—arbutus, lentisk, agnus castus, bay, and myrtle—timbered with luxuriant masses of oak and plane, now and then broken by dark-green clumps of fir and pine—fine pasture intermingling below—the grand framework of the great Peloponnesian ranges around and above: these form the elements, of which every step presents a new variety. The red soil, recalling the fertile recesses of South Devon, and the close-foliaged pathways, revelling in all their freshness after a shower of rain, and exhaling their scented odours as we brush through them, complete this inland woodland picture”—a picture which only wants the mellow sound of the horn and the appearance of the huntress Artemis and her train—

“The breathing roses of the wood,  
Fair silver-buskin'd nymphs”—

to carry us back in imagination some thousands of years.

These mosaics, pieced-in from the accounts of different eye-witnesses, will serve to give us some idea of Hellas—of the Hellas that unfolded itself to the eyes of the early Hellenes. Granted that some details of the picture must be omitted—the laurel, the myrtle, the oleander—all the grand essential features remain—sea, sky, and mountains. There remains also the wealth of wild flowers in forest and woodland, and lightly as we may esteem these humble



ministers of beauty, they played their part, nor were thrown away upon those who then beheld them, if, as Schiller tells us, the first work of art was the grouping of a nosegay, the second, the weaving of a wreath.<sup>1</sup>

This brings us back to the question with which we started—a question to which we are now in a better position to give an answer:—Did Hellas, the land itself, help to develop in the people the sense of beauty which we are accustomed to associate with the Greeks?

Most assuredly, we reply, it did; and this we may say nowadays without much fear of that contradiction which, not so very long ago, such a statement would have called out.

No question, perhaps, connected with the ancient world has been more hotly contested than the one which we have just proposed to ourselves, and so important is it in our argument that, at the risk of wearying the non-æsthetic reader, we must linger over it for a few moments. For, if the Hellenes were insensible to natural beauty—if they “had no eye for the picturesque in Nature,” as has been maintained—then we should be compelled to admit that, in this one respect, the land was not made for the people, that their experiments in the beautiful owed nothing to the beauty around. To an honest mind, such an assertion carries its own refutation with it. Nevertheless, at the outset of our inquiry, we must premise that the standpoint from which we moderns regard Nature is altogether different from that of the ancients. How could it be otherwise? The eyes with which a youth looks out upon the world are not those with which an old man contemplates it. The one seeks in it a scene for action; the other a place of rest. And the parallel holds good, so far, for the youth and maturity of the race. Moreover, since the advent of Him who came to give an understanding to man<sup>2</sup> on this as on other things, Him who “read into” the lilies of the field that sweetest of all sweet meanings, the assurance of the Father’s love, of the Great Artist’s joy in His handiwork—Nature has worn an aspect very different from that which she presented to the ancient world; the underlying unity, the peacefulness, the restfulness of Nature, were voices not heard in antiquity.

But to recognise this—to say that the ancients did not hear the deepest, sweetest voices of Nature; that in this as in other things the ancients “without us” were not “made perfect”<sup>3</sup>; to say with a great poet of our own day that

“The race of man  
Receives life *in parts* to live in a whole”—

is one thing; to deny to the ancients the “seeing eye” is another.

There is, we take it, abundant evidence to prove that if the ancients did not find in Nature that *subjective* pleasure which she affords to us moderns, yet they were keenly alive to her *objective* beauty. Let us, however, first examine the arguments of those who deny to them this seeing eye, and let us note that such arguments are mainly of a negative character.

<sup>1</sup> Die Auswahl einer Blumenflur  
Mit weiser Wahl in einen Strauss gebunden—  
So trat die erste Kunst aus der Natur;  
Jetzt wurden Sträusse schon in einen Kranz gewunden.  
Und eine zweite höhre Kunst erstand  
Aus Schöpfungen der Menschenhand.

—(Die Künstler.)

For the very pretty use of flowers made by the later Greeks, see the account of the Anthesteria, or “Feast of Flowers,” in *Hellas*, at p. 240.

<sup>2</sup> 1 St. John v. 20.

<sup>3</sup> Heb. xi. 40.

(1) First, then, we have the *literary* difficulty. If the Greeks had a love for Nature, it is asked, why did they not introduce passages in praise of the beauty of Nature into their literature? "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh"; and, as a matter of fact, the purely eulogistic passages in Greek literature, such as the beautiful little sketch of the plane-tree by the Ilissus in the *Phædrus* of Plato, already referred to (p. 38), or the no less beautiful picture of his birthplace by Sophocles in the *Œdipus at Colonus*, are few and far between.

A weighty indictment!—how shall we answer it? We oppose our adversaries on their own ground. A literary question must be fought out between critics, and on our side we bring forward an argument of one of the most famous champions of modern times. In some very well-known passages in his *Laocoon* (§§ 16–18), Lessing has conclusively shown that the ancients, or rather the great masters among the ancients, guarded much more rigidly than do we moderns the boundaries of the respective arts. The proper function of Poetry they conceived to be the **narration of actions**, that of Painting the **description of visible objects**. *Time* is the sphere of the poet, *Space* that of the painter. It is inevitable that these two functions and spheres should overlap to a great extent; nevertheless, says Lessing: "I find that Homer paints nothing but progressive actions; objects and single things he paints only through their share in these actions." In other words, objects of all kinds, including those which go to make up pictures of natural beauty, take a secondary place. Thus if the poet would describe to us the Shield of Achilles, with all its varied devices—its sun, moon, and stars, and great river of ocean, its pastures and sleek herds, its corn-lands, its cities, and joyous vintage festivals—he does not weary us with a minute account of the Shield itself, but lets us see it as it grows out of rough metal, stage by stage, under the hand of the glorious lame god, Hephæstus, with his bellows and furnace, his crucibles, anvil, and sturdy hammer (*Iliad*, xviii. 468 *et seq.*). The scenes upon the Shield, beautiful as they are, have no independent place in the poet's mind. They are all subordinate to the action and aim of Hephæstus—the making of a gift which shall be worthy of himself, and also worthily express his gratitude to Thetis, the mother of Achilles.

This example must suffice; but any one who will take the trouble to look through his Homer will see for himself that Lessing is right. Homer (for a very good reason, which we shall discover presently) is all action. Descriptions of natural beauty are brought in only for purposes of illustrating the action in hand or as a foil or a background to that action. We say then, on the first count, that the great reason why we find so few independent descriptions of scenery in Greek poetry is, that the Greeks did not consider such descriptions as coming within the sphere of poetry, properly so called.

(2) Next appears the *artistic* difficulty. Granted (say the art-critics) that elaborate pictures of Nature had no legitimate place in Greek literature, how is it that they are so poorly represented in Greek art? Why were the Greeks so very far behind us moderns in landscape painting?

This, indeed, is a most curious phenomenon, and one which at first sight appears inexplicable. Nevertheless, like many other difficulties, it vanishes when looked in the face. We bring forward as our first witness here an art critic who has devoted years to this very subject—landscape in ancient art—and has studied it on the spot, in the country itself—Karl Woermann (*Die Landschaft in der Kunst der Alter Völker*, part ii., chap. 1). The result of his studies and his journeyings may be summed up in a nutshell, thus:—The reason that the Greeks did not excel as landscape-painters is, simply, that their land is not one which lends itself naturally to such delineation.



To understand this we must recollect that the culture and progress of Greece were thrown, as we have seen, mainly on the eastern side of the land, and consequently it was on this side—especially at Athens and Corinth—that the great art-development took place. Now, what are the characteristics of the scenery on the eastern side of Greece? Bare rocks, bald mountain-peaks, a jagged, strongly indented coast, island fragments—all made beautiful, no doubt, by the deep blue of sea and sky and the effect of the sun-rays playing through the translucent atmosphere, but, nevertheless, all presenting an individuality and a fragmentariness which, far from inviting depiction on a flat surface, most strenuously resist it. The very scenery of Greece has the character which we find implanted in the people; it resents concentration, centralisation. Each mountain-peak, each headland, each island makes, as it were, an art experiment of its own, stands out by and for itself like a **work of sculpture**, and demands to be looked at on all sides and treated on its own merits. Vegetation, even, on this side of Greece shows the same independence; it is met with, not so much in great masses as in isolated clumps or solitary trees, often of great beauty, which seem to claim attention for themselves. Far, therefore, from uniting the landscape into one great whole, vegetation on the eastern side rather heightens the impression of detachedness and individuality.

Thus, there is imprinted on the eastern side of Greece an intensely PLASTIC character, and this, as we know, was precisely the stamp which the Greek national art-genius took. From the moment when the Greeks threw off the swaddling-bands of oriental imitation, to the time of the Macedonian supremacy, throughout the best period, that is, of their art, they were beyond all else, SCULPTORS. Had their lot been cast in a land whose softly flowing coast-lines, gently swelling wooded heights, and general massiveness rather than sharpness of contour, lent itself readily to delineation on canvas, the art-result would probably have been different. As it is, the fact remains that, far from being irresponsible to the influence of Nature, the national genius, in the direction which it actually took, was most faithful and true to the nature actually surrounding it.<sup>1</sup>

And what shall we say, moreover, when we reflect that, in the opinion of another of the best modern art-critics (H. Brunn), some of the Greek sculptures were probably designed to represent *landscapes*? This view is easily understood when we remember that, to the mind of a pious Greek, every object in nature had its divine representative; every river its god; every fountain its nymph. Hence, the sculptured figure of this divine being naturally took the place of the scene itself. Thus, Brunn interprets the figures on the western pediment of the Parthenon as personifications of the different features of the landscape of *Attica* (*Die Bildwerke des Parthenon*, p. 23 *et seq.*). According to him, the river Ilissus, the Cephissus of Eleusis, the fountain Callirrhœ, the mountains Cithæron, Parnes, Pentelicus, Hymettus, with other Attic scenes, are represented there, the centre naturally personifying the Acropolis, as the religious and political heart of the land. The meaning of the groups on the pediments of the Parthenon has been variously and diversely interpreted. This explanation is, however, as reasonable as any hitherto propounded, when the design of the building is taken into consideration, viz., the glorifying of Athena as the patroness specially of *Attica*, her chosen land. If Brunn's view be correct, it confirms the foregoing remarks. Sculpture in Greece, on this

<sup>1</sup> Other questions as to the way in which Greek art was influenced by the special nature around, such as the bearing of the transparent atmosphere on the subject of perspective, will be best discussed when we come to consider the Greek experiments in Art.

assumption, actually took the place of landscape-painting, and fulfilled the design of the latter art in the minds of the Greeks themselves.

(3) Finally, we are met by the—apparently—*common-sense* argument: Why, if the Greeks loved the country, did they crowd together into cities? Well, city life had certainly great attractions for the Greeks, and the Greeks of the classical period—on whose habits our critics have formed the objection quoted—were certainly a very sociable and society-loving people. But may we not find another reason for this supposed preference for city life in the fact that they had practically no choice? How long would our own enthusiasm for Nature last, if it had to be maintained in a region exposed every summer to the ravages of an invading army, as was the case in Attica during the Peloponnesian War?<sup>1</sup>—a common-sense question to be taken into account in a “common-sense” argument. We may be sure that all Greeks, even later Greeks, were not so enamoured of the study of Man as was Socrates, and as for the first Hellenes, there is clear evidence they lived face to face with Nature, and loved her too.

Now that we have considered the three negative objections to our position, and shown, as we believe, good reason why the Greeks did *not* write descriptive poetry, why they did *not* excel in landscape-painting, why they did *not* prefer country to city, let us just look at certain very positive facts, which will reveal to us a good deal of what they really did think about Nature, and what they saw in her.

(1) First, then, we, too, bring forward our *literary* argument. We, too, maintain that, “Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh,” and we point to the testimony of the great *unwritten* literature of the Hellenes, the LANGUAGE which they built up before written signs, and with these what we technically call “Literature,” came into use among them. If many a word coined in the youth of the world may justly be regarded as a “poem” in itself, so may many a Greek place-name—the name of mountain, or river, or headland—be described as a “landscape” in itself, a scene in which some feature of nature is seized and treasured up. This is a subject so rich and full that we must reserve it for consideration in a more fitting place.<sup>2</sup> Here it is enough to note that such names exist in abundance, and that they could not by any possibility have been coined by a people with “no eye” for nature.

But we go further than this. We say that, just as the influence of the Greek religion may be felt in Greek sculpture, so also may it be traced as affecting in a curious way Greek literature. The fact that every object had its divine representative precluded, in great measure, descriptions of the landscape (Woermann). Thus, where a modern poet would wax eloquent over day-break, the rosy flushing of the sky, and the awaking of earth to new life, the Greek poet simply said that Eos—“rosy-fingered,” “white-winged,” “saffron-robed,” “gold-enthroned,” Eos—“the Dawn,” had appeared.

But we go further still than this. We maintain that a love of nature may be shewn in a hundred ways besides direct eulogy of nature; and we say that such a love of nature is the essence of Homer. It is his very life-breath; he cannot repress it.

“But,” says the reader, “how do you reconcile this assertion with the criticism of Lessing, which you have just brought forward as true?” In judging any poet, we reply, the circumstances under which his work arose must always be taken into account; and when we recollect that the *Iliad* grew

<sup>1</sup> Thucydides says expressly that the country people of Attica felt keenly the trial of removal to Athens during the War (ii. 16).

<sup>2</sup> See the section on **Language**.



up for the delectation of an audience composed almost conclusively of *men of action*, we can see very plainly how the rule pointed out by Lessing came to be a rule. Lengthy eulogies of scenery would have had no interest for the warrior knights and the huntsmen of the Heroic Age; such men would have been simply bored by them. The poet or rhapsodist was bound to respect the susceptibilities of his audience. To have been a "bore," would have been to lose his influence. But, then, on the other hand, Homer was a poet, a maker, a creator. What, then, about that Inner Self whose dictates the poet is bound to respect more than the whims of any audience? Homer was a true poet, and as such in sympathy with nature. The "shadowy mountains and the echoing sea" were never very far from his thoughts, and speak of them he must. How, then, does he get over the difficulty? Genius will always find a way of escape. How does he at once satisfy his hearers and liberate his own soul? By his wonderful *Similes*—the most striking and truthful of nature-pictures ever drawn. The *Iliad* is full of metaphors; it has been computed to contain some 180, and of these by far the greater proportion are taken directly from nature. And, let us note, they are mostly pictures of nature in action. Homer understood his audience. Those grim old warriors, who would not have tolerated a description of any object in nature merely for the sake of itself (such a description would have seemed to them perfectly unnecessary and tedious, seeing that they already *knew* it), could yet be roused into a furore of enthusiasm, such as we read of in later days in the *Ion* of Plato, by an association of this very object with some action or deed, with which they themselves were in perfect sympathy. They, too, were Hellenes, and had a love for nature, in their own way. And how adroitly does Homer use this point of vantage; how skilfully does he introduce his little bits of description; how careful he is that he shall never be wearisome, that, as Lessing says, they shall always be subordinate to the narrative; with what a verve do they dash in and carry all before them! Then, when he feels sure that he has roused his auditors, and can count upon their patience, how he delights in his art, how he paints in details (often quite unnecessary for the purposes of the simile), and revels in his own reproductions of nature! Simile follows hard upon simile. They pour from his brain, to use one of his own metaphors (*Iliad*, ii. 87), as pour the tribes of honey-bees from out the hollow rock, forth-swarming ever new, and fly, thick-clustered, on the flowers of spring. At every point of interest in the narrative, at every crisis in the fate of his heroes, Homer sees his opportunity, and is ready with his "Even as," or his "Like to." So we find that there are no elaborated similes in the first book of the *Iliad*,<sup>1</sup>—the poet's hearers are not yet interested in the story; but no sooner is this effected, no sooner are poet and audience thoroughly warmed to the matter in hand, than they begin. And once Homer has his flowing-haired Achæans fairly on the march, how the similes buzz about us, to be sure! The poet has his revenge for the repression of the first book, and sends forth in the second, no fewer than five nature-pictures, "all in a breath," in the space of two-and-twenty lines (*Iliad*, ii. 455-476).

So much as to the manner; then as to the matter, the *Stuff* of his similes. Leaving on one side the pictures drawn from animal life, which are among the boldest and most striking, we find painted for us with rare truth and fidelity all those phenomena of a mountain-land with which we have already become acquainted. Fire in the forest on a mountain-side; clouds motionless on a

<sup>1</sup> Very perfect short ones, however; as when Apollo in his wrath descends from Olympus "like to night" (47), or when silver-footed Thetis rises from the grey sea "like a mist" (359). See also, for a little bit of nature, the history of the sceptre of Achilles (234 *et seq.*).

mountain-ridge while the might of the North-wind sleepeth; mountain torrents rushing furiously in winter-flood to the plain, bearing dry oaks, pines, and much soil to the sea; the boulder carried headlong with them; the crashing of the winds amid the trees of the forest: each and all are used to illustrate some point of the story (*Iliad*, ii. 455; v. 522; xi. 492; xiii. 136; xvi. 765).

The simile of the boulder, brought to a halt in its eager descent, although by no means one of the most beautiful in Homer, affords a capital example of the poet's *Schwung* or "go." It illustrates Hector's onset at the ships of the Greeks, and the check which he meets with:—<sup>1</sup>

"On pressed the Trojan masses: Hector led,  
Impetuous rushing, as a mighty stone  
Rent from the rock; which from some mountain brow  
A torrent has dislodged, with furious flood  
Breaking the holdings of the giant crag:  
Bounding on high it flies; beneath it yields  
The crashing wood; on, ever on, it speeds  
Unchecked, apace, until it reach the plain:  
Then stays, perforce, its haste, and rolls no more."

—*Iliad*, xiii. 136-142.

Then how beautifully, how pitifully does the poet describe the death of his heroes! When they fall, they fall like a poppy in a garden, that droopeth its head aside, heavy with fruit and with the showers of spring; or like a young olive which a man has reared beside the water-springs: blooming and beautiful it stands, just bursting into white blossom, when suddenly there cometh a wind with much storm, wrencheth it from its place, and layeth it low; or they are like to an ash-tree on the crest of a hill seen from afar: hewn down by the axe, it bringeth its delicate foliage to the ground; or they fall as falls the oak, or the silver poplar, or the lofty pine, felled by the shipwrights on the hills with newly-whetted axe to build their craft (*Iliad*, viii. 306; xvii. 53; xiii. 178, 389; xvi. 482).

But most beautiful of all to the mind of us English folk are the sea-pictures of Homer; and, verily, we think that the breath of his salt spray and the dash of his great waves on the rocky beach, have something to do with that *at-homeness* which we feel in Homer. Just as with the phenomena of the mountains, so are the features of the sea brought into the action of the story. The strange, silent, resolute march of the Danaans before the attack, for instance, is as when a billow away out at sea first reareth its crest (in silence), then, breaking on the land with mighty roar, it rounds with arching head the rocky points, and spitteth forth afar the salt sea-foam. Or, when the Greeks themselves meet the onset of the foe, they present a front compact as a tower, like to a huge steep rock hard by the grey sea—a rock that abides the swift paths of the shrill winds and the swollen waves that break foaming upon it (*Iliad*, iv. 424; xv. 618). Or, again, look at this picture of the waves driven before the winds; how it intensifies Hector's impetuous rush!—

"As clouds that of the white South bred  
Are by the West wind driven, what time he smites  
With headlong squall. On rolls the swelling wave,  
High flies the scattered spray beneath the force  
Of the wide-wandering wind. So frequent fell,  
Vanquished by Hector's might, his foemen's heads."<sup>2</sup>

—*Iliad*, xi. 304 *et seq.*

<sup>1</sup> The translation is from the admirable *Similes of Homer*, by the Rev. W. C. Green (1877).

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Green's translation, *op. cit.* See also another very beautiful passage descriptive of the lull before a storm (*Iliad*, xiv. 16 *et seq.*), where, in illustration of Nestor's irresolution, the poet speaks of the "dumb wave" awaiting the rising of the winds.



The sea was known to Homer in all its varied moods and phases. He too calls it, as did our own ancestors, "the barren,"<sup>1</sup> "the unharvested," "the unvin-taged"; he, too, knows it as Thalassa, "the storm-tossed winter sea," which can keep a man prisoner, far from wife and home; but well he knows it also as *Pontos*, "the path," and many a time must he have sailed over its "watery ways," on its "broad back." Then, what beautiful epithets he coins for it! If it is to him the grey sea, or the loud-roaring, or the black sea, it is also the hoary, the wine-dark, the violet-hued, the purple, the echoing, the glittering, the boundless, the divine—and divine to the poet, in all ages, the sea must be.

In yet another way Homer knew the sea—he knew it in a way which some critics would deny to him. Homer, they tell us, is "utilitarian" in his allusions to nature. What a nice word this "utilitarian" is, to be sure! how admirably it brings the Great Unknown down to the level of current criticism. Let us consider this: In the very opening of the *Iliad* when Agamemnon has dismissed the priest of Apollo with hard and contemptuous words—what does the old man do? Make his way to Troy, and tell his pitiful tale to Hector, the favourite of Apollo? This is what he ought to have done, to keep the theory of the aforesaid critics upright. But what does *Homer* tell us that he did?—

"Silently he fared along the shore of the loud-roaring sea."

And there, beside the tossing waves—to Homer, as to us, a reflection of the troubled soul—he tells his grief to Apollo himself. Verily, this one line outweighs volumes of shallow criticism (*cf.* H. Motz, *Ueber die Empfindung der Naturschönheit bei den Alten*).

The counterpart to this picture of dejection is given in the account of the return voyage of the Achæans after expiation has been made for Agamemnon's insolence, and Chryseïs of the fair-cheeks has been restored to her father. No sooner has rosy-fingered Dawn appeared, than the Far-Darter sends a favouring gale, and they set up the mast and the white sails swell in the breeze, and the dark wave shouts aloud around the keel as the ship speeds along to the wide camp of the Achæans. Could any description be more beautiful?—bright Dawn, the white-winged ship, the glorious breeze, the dark wave shouting, "singing" aloud for joy, around the ship. All nature is in harmony with the glad hearts of the Achæans; now at length the wrath of the Far-Darter is appeased (*Iliad*, i. 477 *et seq.*).

We might go on to tell of a certain scene in the *Odyssey*—the vine-hung grotto of Calypso, with its violet meadows and its silver streams—a scene which the poet describes as so beautiful that even a deathless god—Hermes—pauses before it in wonder and admiration (v. 73). But time presses, and we have said enough, we trow, to prove that Homer is the best interpreter both of himself and of his people. In his pages the love of nature is writ so large that he that runs may read, unless of set purpose he close his eyes.

(2) Then, secondly, we, too, bring forward our *artistic* argument, and we maintain that the peculiar development which Art took in Greece was due, in great measure, to the peculiar influence of Greek landscape. As regards this, there is not only the testimony of Greek sculpture, already considered, but of Greek architecture. To attribute the rise of these sister arts among the Greeks to the fact that in their marble-quarries abundance of superb material lay ready to hand, would be a sorry piece of logic. Undoubtedly, this very materialistic factor fits into the argument, that "the land was made for the people, the people for the land"; without Greek marble, Greek artists could not have

<sup>1</sup> See footnote to p. 10.

wrought as they did. But of far more importance is it for us to note, that the grand forms around—the Greek mountains, and the glowing hues in which their rocky peaks are bathed—stamped themselves, so to speak, upon the national genius. How many generations must have drunk in the beauty of the sunsets on the hills of Athens before a Pheidias appeared! Had the clear-cut outlines of Greek hills nothing to do with that exquisite sense of proportion, of symmetry, which is so characteristic of all Greek art-work?<sup>1</sup> Had the radiant tints of the “violet-crowned” city no share in suggesting the brilliant colouring wherewith the pure white marble of a Greek temple was crowned? This brilliant colouring—so strange to us of the North, so appropriate to the glowing South—colouring “which threw around the Parthenon a joyous and festive beauty”—was but a reproduction of what Greek artists saw in the temple of nature.

(3) Finally, there is the testimony of the Greek religion, and that in three ways:—

(a) The very essence of the Greek religion lies in the fact that it grew out of the closest observation of nature—it was emphatically a religion which sought to find God *in nature*. The testimony of Greek mythology as to this is so overwhelming that we must leave it for consideration in its own place. Here we would only think for a moment of the beautiful myths which bewail the fall of the year, and express the joyfulness of the returning spring.

(b) The subject-matter of such legends is, as we know, common to almost all nations; but the influence of the special environment is visible in the form which the Greek versions take. That symmetry and sense of proportion already referred to, as displayed in Greek art, meets us also in Greek mythology. The myths of Hellas, as Welcker (*Gr. Götterlehre*, i. p. 42) long ago pointed out, are remarkable for the absence of exaggeration, and in their clearly-chiselled form present a marvellous contrast both to the monstrosities produced by the Oriental imagination, and the mythologies of the North, grotesque and shapeless as the fogs and twilight that gave them birth. The Hellenic myths are perfectly symmetrical, and kept within bounds like their mountain-valleys or their sea itself, running up either into sharply-marked gulfs and bays, or, where stretching out into expanse, often limited by a visible background of hilly coast.

(c) Lastly, a very remarkable key to Greek feeling is to be found in the sites chosen for temples and sacred places. The Greeks, as we know, grudged nothing, spared no cost in their religion. What was offered to the gods must be the best of its kind; the purest marble, the highest artistic skill, were pressed into their service. We may, therefore, take for granted that the sites chosen for the sanctuaries on which so much care was lavished were selected with a purpose. And this was really the case. Wherever we find a spot peculiarly suited by its natural majesty to impress the worshipper with the solemnity befitting the presence of deity, there, precisely, do we find a temple or a shrine.

Take one instance, a wild and solitary glen, lying in the heart of a mountain. At its western end the valley presents the appearance of a deep, semi-circular recess, a rocky amphitheatre, rising gradually from a stream which runs like a silver thread in a dark ravine at its foot, up to the mountain-wall.

<sup>1</sup> “The Greek mountains have, in part, in their ‘working’ on the mind the effect of Architecture” (Welcker, *Griechische Götterlehre*, i. p. 40). The whole of Welcker’s section on the influence of the Land is most admirable, and to it we are largely indebted. No better summary has ever been written. See also Julius Hare’s *Guesses at Truth*, i. p. 91 *et seq.* (1st ed.), quoted by Welcker *in loc.*



This wall, which forms the background, is in one part cleft in twain from top to bottom. The sides of the rent tower perpendicularly upwards in two tremendous precipices, between which is a yawning chasm, one of the most stupendous rifts in Europe. Thus, in all its savage grandeur, does the lonely glen of Kastri lie, hidden from the outer world, between the rugged arms of Parnassus and Cirphis, at the present day; and thus did it lie before the eyes of those first Hellenes. What did they think of the spot? Did they pass it by with indifference?

The traveller approaching some 2,300 years ago could have supplied the answer. Suddenly, on turning a corner in the mountain-road, there would have burst upon him a vision of unequalled splendour: the great rocky theatre filled with the habitations of men, rising one above another, row upon row, tier upon tier, on wall-supported terraces, from the river to the mountain. Above, on one of the highest points, is a magnificent temple, the centre of attraction, its marble façade of dazzling whiteness glancing under the morning sun in the reflected brightness of the glittering mountain-wall, which seems to gather as in a focus the sun's rays, and flash them back upon the scene beneath, lighting up countless objects of beauty, gods and heroes in bronze and in marble, fountains shaded by spreading plane-trees, laurel, and olive, *thesauroi* protecting national treasures committed to them. Here is a Lesche,<sup>1</sup> painted by the hand of a Polygnotus; here a theatre, a Stadium, both the scene of many a stirring contest for the laurel-wreath; there a Stoa adorned with sterner trophies, shields, and beaks of brass, tokens of fierce conflicts waged on land and sea. On the western ridge, with its grand view over the Amphisian Plain beneath, bounded by the Corinthian Gulf with the Arcadian Cyllênê in the distance, is the meeting-place of the Amphictyonic League; on the east is a group of temples. In the background, towering above the rock-hewn fountain, Castalia, at their base, rise the two mountain peaks, Nauplia and Hyampeia, the giant guardians of the sanctuary, dedicated to the presiding deities of the place, Apollo and Dionysus, the Summer and the Winter-Sun.

Such was DELPHI, rocky Pytho, the treasure-house of the archer, Phœbus Apollo, as it lay in the olden time, the "centre" of the then civilised world (Paus., x.; Plut., *de Pythiæ orac.*; Leake, *Northern Greece*, ii. p. 550 *et seq.*; Bursian, *op. cit.*, i. p. 170 *et seq.*).

Was there no "eye" or appreciation of natural grandeur displayed in the selection of the site? Take away the rocky amphitheatre, the gleaming Phœdriades, the awe and seclusion lent by the encircling mountain-walls; place the temple in a plain, among the ordinary haunts of men—and, notwithstanding its own magnificence, its countless treasures of art, the illusion would be gone. The Hellenes knew this better than either you or I.

Time would fail to enlarge on other and similar instances which rise to mind: the lonely shrine of Apollo the Helper, amid the mountains at Bassæ, with its mossy oaks and its magnificent outlook over the whole of Southern Peloponnesus and the sea; the valley of Olympia, with its coronet of low, encircling hills; the stern Nemean Valley, with the altar-hill of Apesas; the dark glen of Lebadeia, with its mysterious subterranean waters; the "queenly" rock of the Athenian Acropolis, with its group of temples, crowned by silvery haze. Enough has been said to show that the Hellenes had, to say the least, quite as keen an appreciation of scenic effect, and the artistic possibilities afforded by nature, as any of their modern critics.

Connecting now the threefold link of evidence to be found in Literature, Art, and Religion, we cannot fail to see that, not only did the land answer

<sup>1</sup> A sort of club-house or lounge.

every requirement of those who were destined to be experimenters in the domain of the beautiful, but that these experimenters responded to its influence. Granted that the root of the matter lay within themselves, the root, Creative Energy, was nourished and strengthened by what it fed upon, Natural Beauty. "A grand nature elevates, a beautiful nature refines" (Welcker). Those who think otherwise would have us believe that the Hellenes, if their lot had been cast, say, amid the dreary monotony of the Russian steppes, would still have produced a mythology full of poetry, and erected a Parthenon.

The truth is, that the Hellenes drank in natural beauty as he breathed the common air, and would probably have considered it as little necessary to rhapsodize over the one as over the other. The instinct to seize and appropriate the beautiful was as innate in him as was the instinct to reproduce what he thus appropriated; but the receptive and the creative instincts operated, like all laws, both in the natural and the spiritual world, in their own way. "One Spirit—diversities of operations." Amongst ourselves, the beauty of nature impels one man to pour out his thoughts on paper; another, to reproduce them on canvas. The Greek, in all the splendid audacity of the spring-time of Art embodied his, above all, in marble; and well it is for us moderns that he chose precisely this mode of experimenting.

To sum up: What shall we say then to these things? If we find a land marvellously adapted to the people destined to inhabit it:—

1. A land, which shielded its people when as yet, in their infant days, they could not shield themselves.
2. A land, which provided that each race among the people should have fair play and full scope for its own individuality.
3. A land, which was so placed that its people might have free intercourse with the older civilisation, and little intercourse with barbarism.
4. A land, which offered the conditions of climate best fitted to develop energy of character.
5. A land, whose natural resources were such as to encourage enterprise and self-reliance.
6. A land, whose natural features were calculated to stimulate thought and investigation.
7. A land, finally, clothed in the rarest beauty, and stored with material ready to the hand of the artist.

If we find all these conditions grouped together in *one* spot, what can we say but echo, though with a truer meaning, the conviction of Plato? Not Athena, but that Power of whose wisdom Athena was but an earthly shadow, Himself chose out the land for the people, and determined beforehand the bounds of their habitation—the mountains, the seas, and all that these implied to Hellas. If no visible ark of the covenant was borne before the Hellenes as before the Hebrews, certain it is that the same gracious All-Father had gone "before" them to seek out, not, indeed, a place of rest, but a place wherein, without let or hindrance, they might **WORK THEIR WORK**.

Finally, there is yet one feature of this wonderful land which remains to be noted, and that is—its size. Greece is one of the smallest countries of Europe—smaller than Ireland, smaller than Scotland.<sup>1</sup> When we recollect,

1 The area of Portugal	= 35,260 sq. miles.
" " Ireland	= 32,513 "
" " Scotland	= 26,014 "
" " Ancient Greece	} = 21,121 "
excluding Epeirus, but including Eubœa	



moreover, that the space, small as it appears, was subdivided amongst a number of independent States, each of which wrought out an independent history, when we reflect that the extent of Attica, that State which wrought out the greatest history of all, was only 740 square miles, or one-eighth the area of Yorkshire,<sup>1</sup> the contrast between the insignificance of the space and the significance of what was accomplished upon it heightens our conceptions of a people who have left a memory to fill all time. It seems, indeed, as though Providence, foreseeing the march of events—the discovery of a new world, with its boundless extent, its inexhaustible physical resources, and the inflation of ideas that would follow—had resolved to read a lesson to future ages by exhibiting on a few barren rocks, and in the microcosm which we call HELLAS, the true law of historic proportion, the infinite and eternal superiority of mind over matter.

<sup>1</sup> The area of Yorkshire = 5983 sq. miles.  
 „ „ Attica = 740 „

## § II—GREEK LANGUAGE

### FIRST EXPERIMENT: THE LANGUAGE

"A TRULY remarkable experiment!" objects an aggrieved reader. "Have you not just asserted that the Aryans brought with them into Greece a language so rich, so perfectly coined and stamped, that even to this day (to use the words you quoted) it is 'the very joy of the grammarian's heart?' What credit, forsooth, can belong under these circumstances to the Greeks? Once formed, language came naturally to them. From out a mountain of prologue, forth creeps—a mouse!"

Nay! say rather, "Forth flies a nightingale!" But are you quite sure that the Greek language as it has come down to us "came naturally" to the Greeks? How, then, do you account for the fact that no grand Thracian language, no rich Phrygian literature, has likewise come down to us? The Thracians and the Phrygians were near neighbours of the Greeks, placed under very similar natural conditions. Both the Thracian and the Phrygian language belong, like the Greek, to the Aryan family. If the "natural" theory be true, it ought to hold good all round.

No! so far from a grand language coming "by nature" (*phusei*, as the Greeks would say) to any nation, it is, on the contrary, its first work of art (G. Curtius, *Gr. Ety.*, E. T., I, p. 26). The development of its language, says a great thinker, Wilhelm von Humboldt, is the first and most important step in the culture of any nation. It is the step which conditions all the rest, and this advance was made by the Greeks in the early period of which we have no record, except such as is to be found in the language itself. The oldest specimens of the Greek language which have come down to us are the Homeric poems; but, as we have seen, centuries of development were at work on the language before it reached the stage of perfection in which it appears in Homer.

Having said so much to justify our treating language as an *experiment*, we must nevertheless admit that, to a certain extent, our aggrieved reader is also in the right. The Greeks did not *make* their language; they only developed it. They did not create roots any more than the jeweller creates the gold which he manipulates. They did not even set to work upon crude material, for it was not rough ore that the Græco-Aryans brought with them into Greece; the Aryan word-nuggets had already been purified, dressed, and shaped. What, then, did they do?—wherein lies the experimenting? In this, that they threw the nuggets afresh into the crucible of reflection and transformed them. To use what is perhaps a better simile, the Aryan roots and word-forms struck deep into the soil of Greek thought, and brought forth these new and more beautiful blossoms and fruit. Not, however, without effort on the part of the thinkers. "The Greeks," said George Curtius, "did not make their language themselves; they had a rich inheritance, and they marvellously transfigured it" (Curtius, *loc. cit.*).

This "inheritance" came, as we have seen, from the Aryan mother-tongue, that old language that "died on giving birth to her daughters," and in the "transfiguring," the results of the process by which Greek became differ-



entiated from her sisters—the Sanscrit, Persian, Latin, Teutonic, Slavonic, and Lithuanian tongues—lies the gist of the experiment. Each of the sister-nations had to lead her own life, just as each human being has to live his. However much a child may receive from his parents at starting, his own character depends entirely on the use he may make of what he starts with. So in regard to language the inherent weakness or strength of a people shews itself in what it makes out of the word-talents entrusted to it. In this respect the Hellenes gave a glorious promise of their future. Surrounded on all sides by tribes that have not left a trace of any permanent culture, they alone struggled upwards (F. G. Welcker, *Gr. Götterlehre*, i. 27), and worked out a medium capable of communicating the highest and noblest thoughts which man can conceive—a language worthy to be the true Christophoros, the CHRIST-BEARER, the carrier of the “good news” of the revelation of God to man.

We are apt to associate the development of a language exclusively with that of its written literature, but it cannot too often be emphasised that Greek existed in its beauty before writing was employed at all.<sup>1</sup> From the very first the people seem to have loved their language and to have striven both to develop and to maintain it in its purity.

From first to last the “web of words, deftly woven,” exerted an enormous power over the emotional Hellene. He was no true hero who was not great in word as well as in deed, mighty in the Assembly as in the battle. The possession of eloquence could even atone for that worst of deficiencies in the eyes of a Greek—lack of beauty, of personal grace and charm. So in the famous scene in the third book of the *Iliad*, where the old king Priam, with Helen and the Trojan elders, is surveying the Greek army in the plain below, and the contrast between the tall, dignified Agamemnon, beautiful and royal, and the short, rugged, broad-shouldered Odysseus, is discussed, Antenor tells the story of the embassy of Menelaus and Odysseus to Troy. He relates how goodly Menelaus had towered above all present in the height of his stature, and how clearly and to the point in few words he had spoken; how, when Odysseus of many devices rose up, he stood and looked down with eyes fixed on the ground, and moved his staff neither backwards nor forwards, but held it stiff like to a man that knows naught; one would take him for a churl, and no better than a fool. But when he sent forth his great voice from his chest, and words like to the snowflakes in winter, then indeed could no mortal vie with Odysseus, nor then did we wonder, beholding Odysseus’ aspect, that he was the chosen spokesman of the Achaians (*Iliad*, iii. 215 *et seq.*).

And Odysseus himself, when, by reason of his weather-worn appearance, he is made the butt of insolence in the Phæacian assembly, answers the malapert youth who has attacked him in the following singularly beautiful passage:—“Stranger, thou hast not spoken well; thou art like a man presumptuous. So true it is that the gods do not give every gracious gift to all, neither shapeliness, nor wisdom, nor skilled speech. For one man is feebler than another in presence, yet the god crowns his words with beauty and men behold him and rejoice, and his speech runs surely on his way with a sweet modesty, and he shines forth among the gathering of his people, and as he passes through the town men gaze on him as a god” (*Od.*, viii. 166 *et seq.*).

If the orator is thus treated by his countrymen in the eighth century, we need not be surprised when society grows more complex to find the building up of the State itself attributed to him. In the great ode to which we have so often referred (*Soph., Antig.* 354 *et seq.*), Sophocles reckons as one of the achieve-

<sup>1</sup> Niebuhr maintained that the “golden age” of Greek was before a book had come into existence (*Kleine Schrift*, xi. 8).

ments of man that he has taught himself, developed "speech and wind-swift thought, and all the moods that mould a State"; and in this idea the poet is followed by the philosopher, Aristotle (*Pol.*, I. ii., § 12).

What the Hellenes thought about language is indeed best seen in the one fact that in Greek *logos* means not only *word* but *reason*, the highest and best gift of man as distinguished from the brutes (*ta aloga* = "creatures without reason"). A people who regarded "words" as the outward sign of the inward gift were not likely either to coin or to apply them indiscriminately or at haphazard.

In later days speculations as to the origin of words—what they called *etymo-logy* = "the truth about words"—whether names sprang up of themselves, of necessity, or were given arbitrarily by some one, seem to have been very attractive to the Greeks. Socrates (or Socrates-Plato in *Crat.*, for it is impossible to separate that "double-star") holds that "names have by nature a truth, and," he adds, "not every man knows how to give a name." The philosopher Democritus, a contemporary of Socrates (about 430 B.C.), describes words most picturesquely as "statues in sound." Heraclitus, another philosopher, who flourished about a century earlier, calls words the "shadows of things," images which reflect things and thoughts as a clear lake mirrors the "surrounding hills" (F. Max Müller, *Sci. of Lang.*, ii. 334). Such meditative views of words however, beautiful as they seemed to the philosopher, do not suit the poet. To Homer, as to Sophocles, thought is "wind-swift," and its bearers, too, must be "winged." Homer's "winged words" are heralds sent forth with a message of peace and goodwill, or arrows launched by his heroes in keen, trenchant style.

[Here, then, we have four different views of what the Greeks themselves took words to be: truth itself, sculptured thoughts, deep shadows, winged powers.

It would not be an uninteresting task to attempt to range certain words under these different categories. One word rises unbidden in the memory as if belonging to all four, *Anthropos* (man), "the upward looker."<sup>1</sup> Have we not in this word at once the "shadow" of a deep "truth," a "winged" reminder to each one of the race, a perfect piece of "sculpture" worthy to be placed beside that grand old Aryan word, *Man*, "the THINKER." True, the original meaning of the word was in later days neglected, like that of many another significant name. Nevertheless, *anthropos*, "the UPWARD LOOKER; the aspirer to all that is noble and true," still stands out across the ages, for all that have eyes to see, "with upturned face and outstretched hands," a majestic thought-statue.

If we would, however, see in all their fulness what "words" were to the Hellenes, it is to Pindar that we must turn. The "journeys in the Muses' car," smiles, metaphors, turnings of speech, by which he sets forth his vocation, his manner of working, his aims, are astounding. "No statuary" he, that he "should fashion images to rest idly on their pedestals!" (*Nem.*, v. 1 *et seq.*). Nay! of living glowing material will he fashion *his* images, and they shall be borne beyond seas "on the glorious gale of song." From every part of human life his analogies are taken. Now he bids "sow the seed of splendid words"; again, his "shepherd tongue" would fain keep part of a brilliant flock in fold (*ibid.*, *Nem.*, i. 13; *Ol.* x. 8); now he is "labouring with his hand in the choice garden of the Graces"; anon following the "Muses' plough" (*ibid.*, *Nem.*, x. 26; *Ol.*, ix. 26); now with sweet lute he "weaves the woof" of song; now he can raise a "pillar whiter than Parian stone" (*ibid.*, *Nem.*, ix. 44, 811).

<sup>1</sup> So Bergk (*Lit.-Gesch.*, i. p. 127; note 206).



Now his words rush "like the wave sweeping down the rolling shingle"; again they flow like "liquid nectar, the Muses' gift, sweet fruit" of his soul (*ibid.*, *Ol.*, vii. 7; xi. 9); now they "kindle the beacon-blaze of honour"; again they sprinkle the "kindly dew of hymns triumphal in the hope that even the dead may hear perchance the great fame of their descendant" (*ibid.*, *Isthm.*, iii. 61; *Pyth.*, v. 96). He has arrows in his quiver, "swift arrows that have a voice for the wise"; he can send "the swift speech of his tongue as it were a bronze-headed javelin"; he aims at a far throw of the quoit; if it be necessary, the true master of his art will "grapple in the strife, bending the words beneath his grasp, yielding not his ground as he wrestleth in speech, of gentle temper toward the good but to the forward a stern adversary" (*ibid.*, *Ol.*, ii. 91; *Nem.*, vii. 71; *Isthm.*, ii. 357; *Nem.*, iv. 93).

Thus, things natural and supernatural, the Muses, and the Graces, the blaze of fire, the gale, the rushing wave, sowing, ploughing, weaving, and shepherd-ing; the archer, the javelin-thrower, the wrestler; all these images and many more than we have space to quote, are pressed into the service to illustrate the power of words, to show what they can do. As to there being anything which they can *not* do, that certainly is an idea which never entered Pindar's mind.

"As the refining of gold sheweth forth all his splendours, so doth a song that singeth a man's rare deeds make him the PEER OF KINGS" (*ibid.*, *Nem.*, iv. 82).

Such was Pindar's opinion of his art, and of his tools, WORDS.

**The Basis of the Experiment.**—Language was, as we have seen (p. 83), the great mark of distinction between the Hellenes and the tribes around—the *Aglossoi*, "tongueless folk," or *bar-bar-oi*, "stuttering folk," as they called the latter. That their own symmetrical language had been built up on a basis common to several of these so-called "barbarian" tongues, never occurred to them. Plato, indeed, notices in the *Cratylus* that several words, such as *fire*, *water*, *dog*, were the same in Phrygian as in Greek, but he does not penetrate to the meaning of the coincidence; he supposes that the Greeks had borrowed these words from the "barbarians." Seeing that the secret—the fact that words related to each other must have had a common ancestor—was not even guessed at until the eighteenth century of our era, we can hardly wonder that it was not discovered even by a Plato.

To endeavour to shew how Greek became Greek—a language entirely distinct from Latin, Sanskrit, Gothic, and the other Aryan idioms—would be utterly out of place here. All that we can venture upon is to mention a few points of interest and refer the reader for the rest to the works of those who have made the subject a special study.

The first point which we would emphasise is the mysterious nature of the process. We take a group of words, such as the following, all owning a common source, all descended from a common ancestor (Skeat's *Handbook of Cognate Words*):—

ENGLISH.	GREEK.	LATIN.
bear	phéro	fero
kin	génos	genus
door	thyra	fores
fell	pélla	pellis
heart	kêr	cor
wine	oinos	vinum

and we ask how the changes were brought about. Philologists point to Grimm's law, and bid us note that certain initial letters correspond in the sister-languages; *b* in English to *ph* in Greek, and *f* in Latin, and so on,

and they add that these changes take place with the greatest regularity in accordance with a fixed law. Still the mystery is not solved. We can see that certain results were obtained, we can also see the How of the process, but not the Why. Speaking of the changes which took place in the German dialects, Grimm (*Geschichte der deutsche Sprache*, ed. 1848, p. 276) says: "The variation does not merely affect one sound for a particular purpose, much more all sounds at once, without anything being gained thereby in the inner part (the heart) of language. It is a power, as it were, outside of the language which has produced this marvellous effect." Since Grimm's day our knowledge of the mechanism of language has increased wondrously, but still the impetus which gave rise to these variations remains a mystery. We may attribute them to the effect of climatic conditions, imperceptibly modifying the vocal apparatus, so that in a certain locality it becomes easier to pronounce some letters than others. This has its weight, and great weight, in the argument; but what shall we say regarding a country like Greece, which had not one climate, but many? The effects of climatic conditions undoubtedly show themselves in the various dialects of Greece; nevertheless, Greek is a homogeneous structure with peculiarities common to itself, and to *all* the dialects. The only real answer to the question is Grimm's, the working of the mysterious power. There is in language, as in all else, that—

"Divinity that shapes our ends,  
Rough-hew them as we will."

Throughout the whole development of the daughter-languages there is plainly visible, as philologists are beginning more and more to see, the reign of law. In his day, Pott (*Ätymol. Forschungen*, i. 12) could write that "even in letters there does not rule the lawlessness of presumptuous self-will (*frechen Willkür*), but a reasonable freedom, limited by laws founded in the nature of the sounds themselves." And, in our own day, Brugmann (*Ety. of Comp. Grammar*, trans. by Dr. J. Wright, i. p. vi) can say that it is the aim of philologists to seek for the reason of every *exception*, even to these laws, "not occasionally only, but in every case and systematically." The reign of law in the development of language, then, is our first point.

Secondly, we note that although there were thus provided certain grand channels within which and no others, the sound-stream of each people was to flow, yet that all "reasonable freedom" in the regulating of the channels is traceable; as is the case wherever man has to co-operate with the great Demi-urges, *the Worker for the People*.

1. The Greek could go on building up as many new words as he chose, provided he remained true to the old law of word-building; he could invent new forms, but they must be on the analogy of those already in existence. We must not think that the Aryans brought roots into Greece, or any other land where they settled; far from that, the root period was separated by an interval of a thousand years or more from the period of the Dispersion; the root and the other independent elements which constitute the inflexion-particles had become fused inseparably into words, coined and firmly stamped in the mother-tongue and "finished forms only were transmitted to the daughter-tongues."<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, the Greek was doubtless perfectly con-

<sup>1</sup> Bopp resolves a form like "*dodesometha*" into *do-dè-sometha*. Can it, now, be assumed that the affixion of these elements to the root *do* first took place in Greek? Certainly not. The more thoroughly the comparison of the Indo-European languages has been prosecuted, the plainer the following principle has become—viz. that inflection was completed in the parent speech, "only finished forms were transmitted to the individual languages" (Delbruck (B.), *Einleitung in das Sprachstudium*, pp. 57, 176; see also *Appendix*).



scious of what constituted the essential part of most words, the part full of life and meaning as, *e.g.* the root *do* in *didomi*, "I give," and he could go on coining as many new words as he chose, so long as he kept to the old lines.

2. Then, again, the Greek was quite at liberty to please his ear, and please his ear he did. What we call vowel-gradation or "*Ablaut*" was tolerably well settled for him before he came into Greece. In Greek words a certain regular change of the vowel, both in roots and suffixes, is observable, as in—

némo, <i>I pasture</i> ;	nomós, <i>pasture</i> ;
sténo, <i>I groan</i> ;	stónos, <i>groan</i> ;
ameibo, <i>I change</i> ;	amoibé, <i>change</i> ;

and so on. "This vowel-change" (*Gustav Meyer*) "did not arise in Greek soil, but reflects, more or less faithfully, old vowel-relations already developed in the Indo-German period" (*Griechische Grammatik*, 2nd ed., 1886, § 4).

These regular changes the Greek then retained, but he modified and added to them in various ways until the melodious *Klang* of the language satisfied his sensitive ear.

Moreover, he did not scruple to throw overboard any sound that displeased him, and so the letter *s* fared badly in Greek hands.

This is shown by comparison with the sister-languages:—

ENGLISH.	GREEK.	LATIN.
salt	háls	sal
seven	heptá	septem
six	hék	sex

Apparently the hissing sound as an initial was sometimes distasteful to Greek ears, for the aspirate was then put in its place.

3. Finally, we note that the Greek exercised a great amount of freedom in the way of "contraction," which tended very considerably to alter both the structure and sound of the language. This desire to shorten long forms may be attributed either to laziness, or to the exercise of a "wise economy" of speaking-power, or to the universal tendency of human nature to take a "short cut" wherever it is practicable—as in our own "can't" for "can-not," "shan't" for "shall not," and so on. To whatever cause we may attribute it, certain it is that the Greeks went so far as gradually to omit altogether a letter, the digamma *ϝ*, which does not figure in their alphabet. It represented the old *u* of the mother-tongue, and was generally spoken as a vowel, though sometimes written incorrectly as *v* or *B* (*Brugmann, op. cit.*, § 163). It was evidently in use when the Homeric poems were composed, but not as a *written* character when they were first committed to writing, although the sound remained in most Greek dialects, as inscriptions prove, until far on in historic times. The omission of the digamma may be shown thus:—

From the old root<sup>1</sup> *ueq* = "speak," came—

Sanskrit: *vacas* = "speech";

Greek: *ῥῆπος* = "word" (*ῥῆπος*) (*ibid.*, § 151);

Latin: *vocare*.

<sup>1</sup> The processes of shortening are well shown in the important word *Zeus*, the name for God, which the Greeks brought with them from the old home, answering to the Indian *Dyaus*, the Latin *Ju-piter*, the Teutonic *Tiu*, *Zio*, all from the root *div*, "to shine"—*i.e.* God of the Bright Heavens. The contractions arose thus:—

*Zeus*, from *Zēus*, *diēus* (the *Z* from *di*);

*Dios*, from *Diſos*;

*Dii*, from *Diſi*;

*Dia* or *Zen*. In *Zēn* the *ſ* has disappeared entirely (*ibid.*, §§ 361, 493).

Without supplying the digamma, we should not be able to see that *épos* is sister to *vacas*, or *néos* (*néfos*, "new") to *novos*.

It must be admitted, however, that the Greeks went conscientiously to work with the shortening process, for the digamma, when omitted, is frequently replaced in some dialects by a compensation lengthening of the root-vowel, in others by the doubling of a consonant (*ibid.*, § 166); facts worth noticing, inasmuch as they show thoughts and feeling at work in the development of the language.

So much for a very dry subject. Let us pass on now to trace as far as we may some of the actual experiments in word-making, bearing in mind that the process went on vigorously to the days of Aristotle and longer. The language, as we have seen, was formed and made before Homer, and from Homer in the ninth century to the writers of the third century B.C. words were coined continually on the old models as new wants arose, necessities pressed, civilisation, art, culture, philosophy developed, men's ideas expanded, their horizon enlarged. When Aristotle finds that the ethical vocabulary of the day is not adequate to express fully his ideas, what does he say? "Peiratéon—we must experiment!—we must try to coin names ourselves in order to make our argument clear and easy to follow!" (Arist., *Eth. N. II.*, vii. 11), and that this was the course adopted by all great thinkers the Greek language shows. From Homer downwards the versatility of Greek genius and the multiplicity of subjects which enchained and delighted it afforded the widest of ranges and most ample of "pastures for words" (*Iliad*, xx. 249).

**The Giving of Names.**—Following our Græco-Aryans into Thessaly, then, it is evident that one of the first ways in which their powers of manipulating language could show itself would be, naturally, in the giving of names to the various objects met with.<sup>1</sup> They would be obliged, for instance, to find a name for the great mountain at the foot of which they settled. This would be by no means so easy as appears at first sight, for several designations, each of which contains a certain measure of "truth" about the mountain, are applicable to it. Thus they might have called it the "Broad," from its spreading amplitude; or the "Woody," from its forests; or the "Many-folded," from its overhanging ridges and valleys. Each of these epithets would have been correct to a certain extent, but none of them would have expressed that feature which is the characteristic of the mountain—its gleaming peaks, soaring over all adjacent heights, and visible in the dazzling brightness of their snows to an immense distance.<sup>2</sup>

The name "Olympus," "the shining" (G. Curtius, i. p. 330), must have come to the "poet" who made it like a flash of inspiration, and that it has remained to the present day shows that, as a name, it was a survival of the fittest.<sup>3</sup> We may be sure that before that poet could induce his countrymen to look up and see the flashing of the silver spears above he would have some little trouble. There would doubtless be plenty of advocates for "practical"

<sup>1</sup> The names of places—mountains, rivers, promontories, &c.—always present a certain difficulty, and etymologies proposed in regard to them must be accepted with caution, inasmuch as such names may have been given by the earlier inhabitants of a land, and may contain elements not belonging to the language to which they are ascribed. Or they may even be due to visitors, as e.g. Malea, "the height," Tænarum, "smelting," but which, nevertheless, are probably of Phœnician origin. There are, however, in abundance Greek names about which there can be no doubt.

<sup>2</sup> Professor Jebb relates that while travelling in Boeotia on one very clear day a strange gleam was descried in the northern sky, "something that flashed like the point of a silver spear. Our guide exclaimed, 'Olympus!'"

<sup>3</sup> Olympus is the only mountain of Greece which has preserved its ancient name.



names—the “Woody” and the “Broad”—but in the end the “Upward-lookers” carried the day, as they generally do when they are in earnest.

This one example may suffice to show how the experiments in name-giving probably went on. Each name is a picture or a story in itself, and we should possibly not be far wrong were we to imagine that the proposing and accepting of a name in those early times was an event as exciting as is the publishing of a new novel in these latter days, for names are the great unwritten literature of a people. “Next to numbers,” said Pythagoras, “there is nothing so wonderful as names.” And how appropriate and in many cases beautiful these old names are, we have only to wander through Greece to see for ourselves. In this very Thessaly, opposite to Olympus, across the gorge of Tempe, stands another giant, inferior in height to the king of mountains, but conspicuous everywhere by its pointed, conical shape; and this “glorious grey peak,” with its far lookout, became to them Ossa, a name supposed to mean, like Ephyra, “the watch-tower,” “place of observation” (G. Curtius, ii. p. 387). A third Thessalian mountain, with shaggy forests and beetling cliffs, was Othrys, “the brow” (Ross, *Wanderungen im Griechenland*, ii. p. 173). Several of the Greek mountains again took their names from the clouds and tempests which hover round them. Thus we find Ceraunia, “the thunder-hills,” in Epeirus; Typhrēstus, “the whirlwind,” in Middle Greece (G. Curtius, 205); Mænalus, “the wild,” “the stormy” (Pape’s *Wörterbuch*), in Arcadia. The names of others seem to have been given from a fancied resemblance in their shape to that of some animal or other object, as *e.g.* Arachnium, “the spider,” in Argolis; Kerata, “the horns,” in Attica; Cithærōn, “the lyre”; Helicon, “the ring-mountain” (probably from its curved outline), and so on.

Then what about the RIVERS?

One, making the circle of the Plain of Thessaly, and finally disappearing to the sea through the narrow gorge of Tempe, “the cut,” is Peneius, “the thread” (G. Curtius, 304); another, wending its way gracefully through the beautiful plain of Sparta, is Eurotas, “the fair-flowing”; a third, a notable land-builder (see *ante*, p. 59), is Pamisus, “the giver of property” (Tozer, *Lect.*, p. 90); a fourth, a great fertiliser, is Alpheius, “the nourisher”; a fifth, in thirsty Argos, is Erasinus, “the lovely.” Greek rivers, however, are, as we know, mainly distinguished by their wintry violence—a characteristic which gave rise to yet another class of names. One Achæan stream, foaming noisily down the mountain side, is Sythas (*sys*), “the boar”; another, in Arcadia, bears the significant appellation, Buphagus, “devourer of oxen”; a third, with swift, irresistible current, is Arachthus, “the smiter”; a fourth is Spercheus, “the hasty” (the prototype of Achilles, “swift of foot,” so say some myth interpreters). The famous fountain by which Pegasus, “the winged steed,” was found, on the top of Acrocorinthus, is Peirene, “the piercer,” so called doubtless because it pierces through the mountain and bubbles out at its foot in the lower city (Bursian, ii. pp. 16, 17).

PROMONTORIES were named chiefly from their shape, as Ichthys, “the fish,” Chelônatas, “the tortoise,” Drepanon, “the sickle,” Zoster, “the girdle.” One promontory on the Taygetus peninsula they called Thyrides, “the windows,” a most curious name. How in the world, we ask, could a cape deserve the name of “the windows”? E. Curtius has solved the puzzle (*Pel.*). “Imagine,” he says, “steep marble cliffs, rising precipitously out of the sea to a height of about 700 feet, like a gigantic white wall with a blackish border. So violent is the current rushing past at this spot that the promontory can only be approached in the calmest weather. A restless surge beats ceaselessly upon

it, and the waves break with a roar of thunder into the deep caves and holes in the rocks, out of which flutter timidly innumerable doves." Now we see the force of the name—"As doves to their windows!" The gigantic gleaming rock, the window-like holes with which it is perforated, the restless surge, the doves fleeing to their refuge—all this makes an extraordinary impression when seen from the sea, and all this is summed up in the old name Thyrides, "the windows." How poor in comparison is the modern name—Cape Grotto, "the massive!"

Some places, again, bear the names of plants (Tozer, *Lect.*, p. 91). Thus we have Rhamnus, so called from the abundance of the Jerusalem thorn growing there; Myrrhinus, from the myrtle; Agnus, from the *Agnus castus*; Daphnus, from the laurel; Phelloe, from the cork-oak; Erineos, from the wild fig. Selinus, "parsley river," is a name common in moist coast plains. Parsley was a favourite plant amongst the Greeks; of its leaves were made the wreaths that crowned the victors in the Nemean Games.

Some names of this class mark the epoch at which they were given. Mēcōnē, "Poppyland," for instance, carries us back to that great gathering of gods and Titans on the altar-rock in the north of Peloponnesus, when the terms of the compact between the immortals and the puny race of man are discussed, and the wily Prometheus seeks to outwit the far-seeing father of gods and men. Beyond sparkle the blue waters of the Corinthian Gulf, in the background rises the snowy head of Parnassus, at the foot of the rock spreads the wild plain, ablaze in its native luxuriance with the red glow which links the spot with the Fire-giver. But centuries roll on—gods and Titans have gone back to Olympus; the blue waters still sparkle; Parnassus still rears his hoary head; but the plain no longer glows in fiery red. It has become green, refreshingly green—but alas! poetry has fled with the poppies, and the meeting-place of gods and Titans is transformed into—must we say it?—a market-garden, wherein are raised the little relishes that delight the soul of the Corinthian artisan. Mēcōnē, "Poppyland," has become Sicýōn, "Cucumberland" (Bursian, ii. p. 23).<sup>1</sup>

But we must hasten on nor tarry any longer with a subject which is only too fascinating to those who delight in etymologies—the truth about words. Enough has been said, we think, not only to show that Plato was right when he claimed for names a "truth," but also to justify our former assertion that the Greeks had the "seeing eye" for the beauties of nature (p. 71). If more evidence were wanting it is forthcoming in such names as Euoras, "Belvedere," Eu-opis, "Fair-face," Thaumacia, "Wondrous!" names which, there can be no doubt, express the delight inspired by a beautiful landscape. One little name, moreover, seems to carry with it proof that the Greeks had also the "hearing ear." The oak-forest in Arcadia, where was fought the battle that proved fatal to Epaminondas, between Mantinea and Tegea, was called Pelagus, "the Sea" (Paus., viii. 11). Why so? there was no view of the sea to be obtained from it. The reason could only have been that the rustling or the crashing of the wind among the branches recalled to mind the murmuring or the roaring of the waves. Little enough is known about Greek music, but we venture to believe that the old poet who had an ear for the "sea" in

<sup>1</sup> The reader will find a rich collection of place-names in Mr. Tozer's *Lectures*, and many charming hints in the *Peloponnesus* of E. Curtius. Bursian's *Geographie v. Griech.* and Benseler's part of Pape's *Handwörterbuch* (vol. iii.) also offer many interesting suggestions. The *Beiträge zur Geog. Onomatologie der Gr. Sprache* of E. Curtius, and the *Geog. Namen Altgriechenlands* of Angermann may also be consulted with advantage.



the "forest" would have had an ear also for Beethoven. Isolated as the coincidence is, it is worthy of note.<sup>1</sup>

**Word-Building.**—In no way is the fertility of Greek linguistic genius displayed so forcibly as in the building up of compound words, in such words, especially, as are found by the placing together of two ideas, as in our own "common-wealth." In such composition Greek is richer than any other language in the world. Every poet, from Homer downwards, tried his hand at new combinations, and most of these are marvellously effective. As much care seems to have been taken in the formation of an epithet as in the details of a picture. Especially do we find this picturesqueness in the epithets of Homer. Not content with marshalling his winged "subjects" in battalions, he gets as much service out of a single adjective as any ordinary captain of words would out of half-a-dozen. Some of the most remarkable of these, the epithets given to gods and heroes, rank as "Homeric," but it is more than probable that they belong to very high antiquity, and must be regarded as preserved, rather than as coined by Homer. To this class belong such words as "Cloud-gatherer," "High-Thunderer," "Lord of the Lightning," "Ægis-bearer," "Rejoicing-in-the-Thunder," etc., applied to Zeus; "Lord of the Silver Bow," "Far-Darter," "Lord of the Golden-Sword" to Apollo; "Earth-shaker," "Earth-embracer" to Poseidon; "White-armed" to Hera; "Bright-eyed" to Athena; "Rosy-fingered" to Eos, the Dawn, and so on.<sup>2</sup>

"Each of Homer's epithets," says Pope in the introduction to his translation of the *Iliad*, "is a picture." We see Hector "of the glowing-helm," Achilles, "a swift-of-foot" before us; whilst "quivering with foliage" is as applicable to Pelion, "many-folded" to Olympus and Ida, to-day as they were when the epithets were first thought out. Thetis, the sea-nymph, mother of Achilles, is *silver-footed*, Iris, the Messenger (the Rainbow) is *stormfooted*, in Homer (*Iliad*, i. 538; viii. 409); Demeter, goddess of Harvest, is "ruddy"-footed in Pindar (*Ol.*, vi. 94) (from the reddish hue of the lower part of the corn-stalk); Eos, the Dawn, is "golden"-shoed in Sappho (21(12)): but every poet, well nigh, has his own name for Rosy-fingered Morn, the "white-winged," "saffron-robed," "gold-enthroned" goddess.

Some epithets again enclose within a word a whole myth, e.g. *odonto-phyes*, sprung from teeth used by Euripides (*Phœn.*, 821), carries us back to the story of Cadmus, and the sowing of the dragon's teeth, whence sprang the Sparti, the ancient noblesse of Thebes; whilst *chryso-gonos*, "gold-born," and *drakonto-mallos*, "with snaky locks," both used, recall the story of the Sun hero Perseus, his birth in a shower of golden rain<sup>3</sup> and his contest with the powers of darkness, the snaky-locked Gorgons, Medusa and her sisters.

Nor is the attribute of picturesqueness, or the power of saying much in little by any means confined to words relating to gods and heroes. Coming down to mundane affairs, were we to attempt to note all the words that arrest our attention by their vigour or terseness, we should end by transferring the greater part of the Greek vocabulary to our pages. A few examples must suffice.

<sup>1</sup> According to Pausanias, the significance of the names was borne in upon the Greeks in a way to be remembered. The oracle at Delphi had warned Epaminondas (so runs the story) "to beware of Pelagus." The great Theban was thenceforward careful not to set foot on a ship; but, adds Pausanias, "Apollo evidently meant this oak forest, Pelagus, and not the sea."

<sup>2</sup> We do not attempt to give the equivalents of these majestic old epithets in Roman letters. Such words have a way of looking very ferocious when transliterated, as though they resented the indignity of putting on the garb of the conqueror—and the barbarian.

<sup>3</sup> Whence the epithet as applied by Æschylus (*Pers.*, 80; *Prometh.*, 799), to the Persians, supposed to be the descendants of Perseus, the gold-begotten hero.

The expressions denoting words themselves are, we may be sure, pithy and often amusing enough.

First let us look at a few Homeric words.

A reckless speaker, one who, like Thersites, the demagogue, was not afraid to "take kings in his mouth" and revile them, is *akritomythos*, literally one who does not *sift* his speech, and the harangue of the same Thersites, after he has been chastised by Odysseus, is characterised by the rest of the folk as *epesbolos*, "a throwing about of words" (*Iliad*, ii. 246, 275). The taunts which the heroes have ready for the foe in such abundance that a hundred-benched ship would not carry the load of them, are *Kertomia*, "heart-cutting words" (*Iliad*, xx. 247, 202). Odysseus denounces the foolish reproaches which Agamemnon has allowed to escape the barrier of his lips<sup>1</sup> as *anemōlia*, "words of air" (*Iliad*, iv. 355). Boasting, "talking big," is originally simply a *kompos*, "a noise" (*Iliad*, iv. 17).

Here is a proverb in a nut-shell: *Athyroglōttos*, "a tongue without a door," applied by Euripides (*Or.*, 903) to a babbler, one who cannot keep his mouth shut. A discomfort sometimes experienced by loquacious individuals is indicated by another word used by the same poet, *glōssalgia*, "tongue-ache, endless talking" (Eurip., *Med.*, 525; *Andr.*, 690). One who argues for arguing's sake, a quibbler, is *akanthologos*, "a thorn gatherer" (*Anth. P.*, xi. 20, 307).

The epithet *krēmnoipoios*, "talking precipices," is applied by Aristophanes to Æschylus, on account of his fondness for long and rugged words (*Nub.*, 1367). Finally, we give as a sample of what the Greeks could achieve in the way of word-building, agglutination, or word-sticking-together, as Mr. Ruskin would doubtless have us call the process: *lalo-bary-para-melo-rhythmō-batēs*, a comic word used by Pratinas to describe a "heavy-going discordant talker" (Aristoph., *Prat.*, i. 13).

Many of the words compounded with *chryso*, "golden," are noticeable: some of them we have taken over bodily, as *chrysanthemum*, "the golden flower"; *chrysalis*, the golden sheath of the butterfly. Other pretty names are *anemone*, "the wind-flower,"<sup>2</sup> and *kallipetalon*, the beautiful-leaved plant, "the cinque-foil." Hesiod calls the ant *idris*, literally, the knowing one (*oida*), the provident creature; the snail, *phere-oikos*, "house-carrier"; the polypus, *anosteos*, "the boneless one" (*Opp.*, 776. 569, 522); while in Æschylus, the bee has a telling name, *anthemourgos*, "the worker in flowers" (*Pers.*, 612). Finally, not to weary the reader with a catalogue which might be extended almost *ad infinitum*, let us close with a glance at the enormous family of words compounded with *phil*, "lover of," or "fond of." It gives a very curious insight into Greek life. All varieties of tastes and opinions are represented: from *phil-autos*, "loving one's self," to *philo-theos*, "loving God," words both found in Aristotle (*Rhet.*, II. xvii. 6; *Eth. N.*, IX. viii. 4); from *philo-machos*, "loving the fight," to *philo-zoos*, "loving one's life," i.e. a coward, an idea also expressed in *philo-psychos*; from *philo-kalos*, "loving the beautiful," and *philo-mousos*, "loving the Muse," to *phil-argyros*, "loving money," and *philo-kerdes*, "greedy of fame"; from *philo-ergos*, "fond of work," to *philo-lalos*, "fond of talking"; and from *philo-dikaos*, "loving justice," to *philo-dikos*, "loving litigation"; from *philo-mathes*, "fond of learning," to *philo-deipnos*, "fond of good dinners"; from *philo-sophos*, "lover of wisdom," to *philo-kenos*, "lover of emptiness," i.e. show. Such words, and there are hosts of

<sup>1</sup> Literally, of his teeth, *herkos odontōn*.

<sup>2</sup> *Anemōnæ logon*, be it observed, are "flowers of speech" with a suggestion of, must we finish the definition, emptiness, flowers of air, deceptions.



them, coined by the Greeks themselves at various periods, throw many a side-light on Greek life.

**Words are Symbols of Ideas.**—Far surpassing in interest any external shaping of words, however, is the process by which words became the vehicle of thoughts higher than those which they bore originally—that process whereby ideas were transferred by analogy from things of sense to things of the mind, its hidden powers and their working. Second to this alone is the historic value of words, the light which they shed on the different stages of a nation's growth, material and intellectual.

Let us try, then, to trace the probable development of a few of these idea-bearers, and watch them, as by experiment after experiment, they either expand in meaning historically or exchange the primary import of the earth, earthy, for the later, spiritual significance. We cannot attempt to keep the two classes apart, for they overlap; neither is it possible, save in rare instances, to say precisely when this or that alteration or development took place.

We cannot do better than preface our inquiry by a group of "advance" words. *En avant!*

The first two take us back to the dim old time when the greater part of Greece lay, to use the words of the Homeric Hymn to the Pythian Apollo, "deep shrouded by forest, no way or path was there then through the wilderness" (ii. 49). What labour, what toil must have fallen to the lot of these first pioneers ere the sunlight was admitted, a track cut through the forest, the ground cleared for the habitations of men!

In later days the same process had to be repeated by the advance-guards of armies, and hence, probably, arose the significant word *Prokoptō* in its double meaning of "cut down" and "progress."<sup>1</sup> He who would arrive at the goal must "cut down" resolutely whatsoever hinders his "progress." "The way of the slothful," saith the wise man, "is as an hedge of thorns."<sup>2</sup> *Prokopē*, then, is our first watchword. *En avant!* Cut down, and spare not.

In the second word we reach a fresh stage; the road is made. To the question, *How* shall we reach the goal? the answer is ready, summed up in one word—*Methodos*! Only by following up the *way* opened out, by *method*, can knowledge be pursued so as to be caught, and made one's own. Hence *Methodos*, as "the way to knowledge" came to be synonymous with inquiry, research, the "*How*" of science; finally, with science itself. In this sense it is used both by Plato and Aristotle (Plato, *Rep.*, vii. p. 533 C; *Phædr.*, 269 D; Aristotle, *Eth. N.*, I. i. 1; *Pol.*, I. i. 3; *Poet.*, xix. 2). *Prokopē*, *Methodos*—two good words; but still *en avant!*

The third stage shows the goal attained, previous journeyers overtaken. How shall we still proceed *en avant*? Aristotle shall tell us again. By *generous* work—*epidosis*, literally a "giving over and above" what is required by bare necessity. A little more care, a little more thought, a little further widening of the path, a little further deepening of the channel, here a line, there a line; in this way, the supply of deficiencies, Aristotle tells us (*Eth. N.*, I. vii. 17), the increase, growth (*epidoseis*) of the Arts have taken place; in this way must all growth, material, mental, spiritual, take place. Is it not so?

Here then are the three watchwords of progress: *Prokopē*, *Methodos*,

<sup>1</sup> St. Paul uses the word very effectively in Phil. i. 12, when he says that the things which had happened to him had "fallen out rather unto the furtherance (*prokopēn*) of the Gospel." In an age that asked scornfully "What is truth?" the sight of one content to be imprisoned and to suffer hardships for the sake of truth was a powerful instrument in the "cutting down" of indifference. To use a continuation of the same simile it was a *proodopoeia*, "a preparing of the way."

<sup>2</sup> Proverbs xv. 19.

*Epidosis*, "cutting down," "method," "growth." By these the makers of Hellas led the van of progress among Aryan peoples, and the cry is still among Aryan peoples—" *En avant!* "

Let us now try to follow up a strictly historical group. As we shall see, centuries often elapsed before a word put forth its full fruitage and showed its capacities for good and evil, for weal or woe. Such a word is the first which we select—*nemo*; the little triad *nem* and its derivatives shall take us through the making, yea, and the unmaking of Hellas.

*Nemo* belongs essentially in its origin to a *nomad*, pastoral race. It came in with the first Græco-Aryans to the broad pastures of Thessaly, and it presided over the allotment of the said broad pastures to the various members of the clan; for it means, primarily, to "allot" or "deal out," to "count up,"<sup>1</sup> and also to "feed." Hence, in *nemo* we get a glimpse of one of the very first proceedings of the future Hellenes, and an interesting one it is, inasmuch as it gives testimony to the reign of order. There is nothing of arbitrary seizure, of taking by force, from one another, whatever there may have been beforehand from the unlucky natives, in *nemo*. The different spaces of meadowland are evidently *allotted* by the chief or elders of the clans, in accordance with some definite custom, so as to insure that each member of the community shall have what is due to him, *i.e.* what he requires for the *number* of cattle which he has to *pasture* (H. Schmidt, *Synonymik der Gr. Sprache*, § 17). An interesting derivative of *nemo* in its primary sense is *Nomios*, "the pastoral god," an epithet applied to several of the Greek deities, especially to Apollo, Hermes, the Nymphs, Pan, in their character as protectors of shepherds and their flocks and herds.

From the occupation of the land as pasturage and the consequent settlement upon it of the clan came the meaning developed in *nemomai*, "I get allotted to myself," "I dwell," and in the substantive *nomos* signifying first, "pasture," then "an abode assigned to one." The primary meanings of *nemo*, then, have shown us our Græco-Aryans arriving, taking possession, and settling down.

An interesting compound—*lei-nomos*—"dwelling amid the crops," must be noted here, because although a late word, it yet describes the inevitable result of the settling down. The pasturage has become exhausted, and the settlers have been obliged in desperation to put their hand to the plough, to take to agriculture (see *ante*, p. 33). Not till this stage has been reached can the Aryans rank as *Greeks*. We are justified in introducing the word here, because the first part of the compound occurs in Homer—in the beautiful passage where Agamemnon's proposal that the Achæans should return home is said to stir the hearts of his hearers, like the rush of the west wind swaying a deep cornfield (*lëion*) bowing down the ears (*Iliad*, ii. 147).

The next development, *nemesis*, is exceedingly interesting. Even in order-loving communities are to be found arrogant and selfish characters, people who will not be content with their own portion of this world's goods, but will contrive to annex what they can of their neighbour's. Such conduct—the high-handed appropriation of "somebody else's holding," or any unfair distribution of the land, or any conniving at the wandering of cattle past the settled bounds—would naturally give rise to great indignation, and this is exactly what came to be expressed in the word *nemesis*, which, although it may strictly mean<sup>2</sup> *distribution of what is due*, acquired the sense of "righteous wrath" at anything *undue*, unfair, or disproportionate. In Homer,

<sup>1</sup> Note the connection with the Latin *numerus*, "number"; also from the old root *nem*.

<sup>2</sup> Like *nemesis*, Curtius, Liddell and Scott, Schmidt's *Synonymik der Gr. Sprache*.



the word and its derivatives have often a fine meaning. Thus, when Poseidon, the great Earth-shaker, would urge on the depressed Achæans to the fight (*Iliad*, xiii. 117 *et seq.*), he says that he would not quarrel with one who ceased from the battle, being a weakling; but with them, strong men and heroes, the case is different—more is *due* from them. "With you," he says, "I am heartily wroth" (*nemessomai*), and he bids them each one lay up in his heart (*aidōs*) shame and (*nemesis*) righteous indignation against himself. Again, when the cowardly Agamemnon tries to induce the Achæans to steal away under cover of the darkness, he urges (*Iliad*, xiv. 80) that "there is no *nemesis* in fleeing from ruin, even by night"—no one will cry Shame! or reproach us under such circumstances.

In both passages the old meaning of "allot" and "getting allotted to oneself" is plain, but the application is nobly altered—the allotment is not now share in the common lands, but share in the common *danger*; and *nemesis* expresses the just indignation against such as hold back from taking their part in that. Again, when the Achæans are bidden conceive "nemesis" against *themselves*, it is because they are not doing what is *due* to themselves as men and heroes.

In Hesiod this feeling is already personified as Nemesis, goddess of offended justice. Wickedness has grown to such a pitch, things have reached such a pass, the poet declares, that Aidos and Nemesis will shortly abandon men, and ascend in their pure white raiment to the immortals (*Op.*, 198).

By the natural growth of the same idea, Nemesis finally develops into retribution, the Chastiser of excessive or undeserved good fortune, and the insolence (*hybris*) which follows in its wake. This idea seems to have made a most extraordinary impression on the Greeks at the time of the Persian Wars, especially when the arrogance of the Eastern despot received so manifest a check. This feeling also gave rise to an epithet of Zeus (derived from the same root) as highest god—*Nemtor*, "avenger, dispenser of right."

To return, however, to our herdsmen. It is quite certain that occasions for *nemesis*, "righteous displeasure," could not remain long absent. They were sure to occur, and would call for fair settlement. Hence we get our fourth word, *nomos*. In its primary sense, *nomos* means something "*allotted to one*," something "*due to one by possession or right of position*"—as to the father or mother of a family. The customs of a family are its laws; and in like manner the customs of the larger family of the clan, the tribe, the State, become also *its* laws. Only very gradually, however, by force of usage and prescription, did *nomos* become law in Greece. In Homer, *nomoi* exist not; the function of the kings as judges is to watch on behalf of Zeus over the *themistes*—that is, the existing judgments and ordinances<sup>1</sup> which have come down from time immemorial and been established in the beginning by Zeus himself (*Iliad*, i. 238). Hence, in Athens, the ancient laws of Draco are called *thesmoi*; the newer laws of Solon, *nomoi*.

Another curious use of the word *nomos*—its application to a musical mode or strain—must not be passed over in a history of experiments. It is connected with the very beginnings of music and lyric song. All poetry has its roots in religion, and the Greeks were no exception to the rule. When the sacrifice was brought to the altar, the deity was called upon graciously to accept the gift. This was done in later days by a priest, who, in a measured, solemn way, sang to a musical accompaniment the invocation, or hymn, which was composed according to an *established form*, handed down by tradition, and

<sup>1</sup> Our *doom*, all from the same root *the*=to establish, fix, settle.

hence called *nomos* (Bergk, i. p. 324). The name in its origin, however, may simply be due to the root-connection of *nomos* with number, a meaning which lies also in the very nature of music itself, as numbered, measured sound. Certain it is that the Greeks recognised the reign of order and rhythmical progression in the realm of sound as elsewhere.

In harmony with the development of *nomos* as "established custom," "law," is another development, *nomisma*, something "sanctioned by custom"; hence, poetically, any "established institution," but more generally, the "current coin" of the State, as representing its established rights. With the introduction of *nomisma*, "money," we have indeed arrived at a new phase of society. The old simplicity of life is gone; according to Sophocles (*Antig.*, 295 *et seq.*), "Nothing so evil as money ever grew to be current (*nomisma*) among men. This lays cities low; this drives men from their homes; this seams and warps honest souls till they set themselves to works of shame; this still teaches folk to practise villainies and to know every godless deed." Could any preacher nowadays give us a more vigorous comment on "money," the love of it, the root of all evil?

Again, we pass on to another development, and a most striking one. If by *nomisma*, "a coin," can be expressed in the words of Him who knew no *anomia*, "lawlessness," the "rendering to Cæsar the things that be Cæsar's," so in the sister-word *nomizein* there came also to be expressed the "rendering to God the things which be God's." Besides a variety of minor meanings, such as "to hold as a custom," "to be accustomed to do," *nomizein* has also the deeper significance from which custom itself springs, the *rights* in which the custom originated. Hence, *nomizein* expresses the belief held in regard to God or the gods as upholding the universe, and therefore having a *right* to honour and worship (H. Schmidt, *op. cit.*, § 17).

Thus, in following the unfolding of the little words *nemo*, *nomos*, on Greek soil, we ascend, on the one hand, from notions familiar to every nomad tribe—pasturing and allotting according to custom—to the condition implied in such phrases as "a settled legislation," "coin of the realm"; and, on the other hand, from an elementary religious belief such as is expressed in *Nomios*, "the shepherd god," to the wonderful moral chain culminating in *Nemesis*.

Further, we have also a significant view of the way in which a word, when fully developed, can play the tyrant and make itself a barrier to progress. *Nomizein* meant among other things, as we have seen, the rendering to the gods of their *dues*, hence belief in them; but in process of time the primary meaning was forgotten, the notion of "custom" alone survived, and *nomizein* came to be used of *customary belief*, traditional belief, the belief of the majority of the State. In this sense it cost Socrates, one of the most religious men that ever breathed, his life, for as both Xenophon and Plato tell us, his accusation ran that he was "not a believer in (*ou nomizōn*) the gods of the States" (Xen., *Mem.*, I. i. 1; Plato, *Apol.*, 243).

Nor was the martyr-death of Socrates the only harm wrought by the degeneration of this same word-family; for in the hands of the Sophists, as we shall presently see, "*nomos*" as custom, "convention," was made to play a traitor's part, and contributed, considerably more than did Philip of Macedon, to the un-making of Hellas.

But now let us return once more to that primitive age, when as yet neither sophistry nor sophists had come into existence, when men had too hard a fight with stern realities to have leisure or disposition to indulge in word-jugglery. Let us go back to the simple days regretted by Sophocles' Creon when as yet also Money, the mighty tempter, was not, and current coin trod the pastures of Thessaly in the shape of stalwart oxen.



The group of "ox-words" in Greek is interesting as a relic of these old days.

1. *Poly-boutes*, "rich-in-oxen," i.e. wealthy, and *a-boutes*, "without oxen," i.e. poor, carry us back, as we have seen (p. 33), far beyond the Homeric age. In Homer, oxen are still the standard of value; witness the account, in the Sixth Book of the *Iliad*, of the exchange of gifts between the Lycian Glaucus and the Greek Diomedes, a little transaction wherein the Lycian's golden armour passed to the Greek in return for the latter's bronze armour, "the value of one hundred oxen for that of nine," says the old poet, with the comment that Zeus, on that occasion, "had taken from Glaucus his wits" (*Iliad*, vi. 234 *et seq.*).

2. Again, the fact that *bous* means both "ox" and "shield," *rhinos* both "hide" and "shield," throws a light on the warlike equipment of the period. "To right, know I, to left, know I," says Hector, "the wielding of my tough shield" (literally, my *bôn*, "dried ox-hide") (*Iliad*, vii. 238), and the tower-like shield of mighty Ajax, the bulwark of the Achæans, wherewith he protects his grim face, is made of seven ox-hides covered by an eighth layer of shining metal (*Iliad*, vii. 219 *et seq.*).

3. In *boulutonde*, again, we have a kind of "primitive chronometer"; the tide of battle is said to turn on the fatal day of destiny to Patroclus, "when the sun turned at the time of the unyoking of oxen," i.e. the eventide, a phrase occurring again and again in the *Odyssey* (*Iliad*, xvi. 779; *Od.*, ix. 58).

4. Finally, *alphesiboiai*, "bringing in oxen," as an epithet applied to maidens whose charms bring in many presents from wealthy wooers, belongs to days when Greek maidens were free to consult their heart, free to meet the village youths, in social gatherings, free to join in the dance, as portrayed on the shield of Achilles: the maidens in their fine white linen and fair wreaths, the youths in their tunics well-woven, their golden daggers hanging from silver belts, with hands on one another's wrists; whilst a great company stands round the lovely dance with joy, and among them a divine minstrel makes melody on his lyre (*Iliad*, xviii. 591 *et seq.*).

If in "the time of unyoking of oxen" Homer has given us one old-world "chronometer," he has also preserved another in the hour "when a man cutteth timber, maketh ready his meal in the dells of a mountain, after he hath satisfied his hands with felling tall trees and weariness cometh on his soul, and longing for sweet food seizeth his heart" (*Iliad*, xi. 86 *et seq.*; cf. Geddes, *Homer. Problem*, chap. on "Local Mint-marks"). As our woodman rests on his log and satisfies his hunger, let us look at a group of forest words, which have grown out of his surroundings. Such sylvan scenes offer "ample pasturage" for words.

Look, for instance, at the bushes and thick underwood; they are painted for us by the old master. In one of the Homeric similes, the sharp glance of a seeker is compared to an eagle: "The bird, they say, of keenest sight of all birds under heaven, whom, though he be on high, the swift-footed hare, crouching under a thick-leaved bush, escapeth not; but he swoopeth down upon it, and quickly seizeth her and taketh her life away" (*Iliad*, xvii. 673 *et seq.*). Here the word rendered "thick-leaved" is *amphikomós* (literally, "with-tresses-all-round"), as though the nymph of the bush had let down her flowing locks to conceal the little "cowering thing"<sup>1</sup> which had come to her for protection. The grand oak, too, which our woodman has just felled, is *hypsikomos*, "high-tressed," bearing its leafy tresses on high like the Hamadryad, who has her abode within (*Iliad*, xiv. 398; xxiii. 118).

<sup>1</sup> *Ptox*, "the hare"; literally, "the cowering creature."

Look, again, at that sturdy ash which is marked out for felling. Had one asked how it has acquired the property of toughness which makes it so valuable for the spears of the heroes, the reply would have been: "It is *anemotrephe*," "nurtured by the wind" (*Iliad*, xi. 256). It gained its toughness as a sapling, battling and grappling with its rude nurse.

When our woodman stoops beside the spring to quench his thirst, the spring, too, has a story to tell him—the very origin and fountain of all stories—the *myth-os*; for *mythos*,<sup>1</sup> in its primary meaning, is literally the "speech of the spring," the inarticulate babbling and murmuring which the ear can translate as it lists. The Muses themselves, the "violet-tressed," the "golden-filleted," the "Pierian daughters of Zeus" (Pind., *Pyth.* i. 1; iii. 89; *Ol.*, xi. 196), the choir of thrice-three maidens, divinities of music, the dance, the song, the drama, of all culture and poetry; these wonderful creations of Hellenic imagination were in the beginning probably neither more nor less than the spirits of the mountain springs of Pieria.<sup>2</sup>

Thus our woodman is by no means lonely in his solitude; the very pebbles, clinking softly together in the current of the stream, have a language for him, as they had centuries later for Theocritus (22-39); they are *lall-ae*, "gentle talkers," murmuring a lullaby of their own.

Before leaving the forest or water-group, let us just note that one word, derived from *rheo*, "to flow," and connected with the "regularly recurring motion" of water—whether the constant drip-drip of the spring, the splash of the fountain, the steady current of the stream, or the regular beat of the waves on the rocks—still flows along in the current of language at the present day: *rhythm*, that which gives clearness, steadiness, purposefulness of form to the flow of words, whether they flow in poetry or in prose.

Now, passing on, another of the Homeric similes shall link the next stage of development—the agricultural—to the pastoral epoch. The close hand-to-hand fight between the Trojans and the Achæans, as the former attempt to scale the wall round the Greek camp, is, says the poet, "as when two men quarrel about the bounds of their land, with measuring-rods in their hands, in a common field, and contend in a narrow space for equal shares" (*Iliad*, xii. 421 *et seq.*). Here we note that the "common" pasture has been succeeded by the "common" field. The task of clearing the ground and preparing it for tillage in these first days of settlement was far too great for any one individual to venture upon. It must have been a joint undertaking, the work of the sib or clan (Schrader and Jevons), each member being guaranteed his share of the produce, later of the land, in return for his labour. Here, then, we have a scene very similar to the disputes about the pasturage which probably brought forth

<sup>1</sup> Kögel connects *mythos*, "speech," with the O.H.G. *musse*, "spring," "source" (prim. form *madh-ti*); cf. O.H.G. *mutilôn*, "to murmur," "mutter" (Paul-Branne's *Beiträge*, vii. 180; quoted by Brugmann, § 522).

<sup>2</sup> We agree with Bergk that *muse* cannot be derived from *maō*, *maomai*, "to strive after, seek after." Such an etymology, again, as "the thinking ones," however beautiful, can hardly be maintained. No early Greek divinity had an altogether abstract origin. "The fountain," as Bergk beautifully says, "springing pure and clear from the rock or the bosom of earth, will always make a powerful impression on those whose feeling for nature is not blunted. It not only invites the wayfarer to tarry, but also to meditation and peaceful communing with himself. This is the mood from which all poetry springs. The whole of nature was thought of by the Greeks as ensouled, therefore it must be a higher, a divine being, which made itself heard in the murmur of the spring, the rush of the torrent; hence the fountain-nymph, who in solitude animates the poet, comes to preside over song; hence, also, note the belief that a draught of water from such a sacred spring would inspire." Bergk connects *muse* with a Lydian word, *mōu* or *mōus*, signifying, according to Hesychius, "water" or "spring" (*Griech. Literatur-gesch.*, i. p. 320).



*nemesis*, "anger about injustice and encroachment." Here recourse is had to a more exact defining of the bounds by the *metron*, or measuring-rod, which each holds in his hand. In Homer, however, let us note that *metron* signifies not only a measure of length, but of *amount* in any shape. Thus we read of 1000 measures (*metra*) of wine and 20 measures (*metra*) of barley-meal (*Iliad*, vii. 471; *Od.*, ii. 355).

From this simple word came a whole group second in importance to no other product of Greek thought. *Metrios* meant "within measure," *to metrion*, "the measured amount," "the amount measured in proportion to the circumstances"; hence "the *mean*," the golden mean. Then came another equally natural development, *sym-metreo*, "to measure with a standard," "to measure by comparison," hence "the observance of proportion"; hence a fourth and noble word, *sym-metria*, "symmetry"; and yet a fifth, the quality of keeping within due measure, *metriotes*, "moderation."

*Metrion*, "measure"; *metrios*, "in accordance with measure"; *symmetria*, "well-compared, well-proportioned measure"; *metriotes*, "keeping within measure," no chain of thought is more essentially Hellenic than that expressed in this sequence of "measured" words. Proportion, symmetry, moderation, this is the Greek ideal, not only of beauty, but of goodness. Pindar's idea of a noble man is the man "loved for his kind entreating of strangers, to the just mean (*metra*) aspiring, to the just mean (*metra*) holding fast, and his tongue departeth not from his thoughts" (*Isthm.*, v. 70 *et seq.*). And Plato's idea of a noble life is a life "within measure and steadfast."<sup>1</sup> This is the life which he would prescribe for the guardians or joint rulers of his ideal State. If any one of these, however, is not content with this "safe and harmonious life, which in our judgment, is of all lives the best, but infatuated with some youthful conceit of happiness which gets up into his head, shall seek to appropriate the whole State to himself"—not content with his *measured* degree of power—"then he will have to learn," says Plato, "how wisely Hesiod spoke when he said 'Half is more than the whole'" (*Pol.*, 466B, Prof. Jowett, p. 161).

The wise scheme of life of that other old Aryan sage, "Nothing too much!" which was engraved on the temple wall at Delphi, approaches very closely to the prayer of Agur the Semite, "Give me neither poverty nor riches," but the due and fitting amount, "Feed me with food *convenient* for me."<sup>2</sup>

Do not, however, let us run away with the idea that "the true mean," "the just mean," meant "mediocrity" in our modern sense of the term. Far from that, as Aristotle, the great expounder of the doctrine of the Mean, shall tell us: "It is not the superabundance of good things," he says, "that makes a man independent, or enables him to act, and a man may do noble deeds though he be not ruler over land and sea. . . . for a man who has but modest means (*metria*) may do his duty" (*Eth. N.*, xviii. 9, 10, 11).

*To metrion*, *symmetria*, *metriotes*—these were the links in the measuring-chain wherewith the wisest makers of Hellas sought to survey and enclose the "common field" of life.<sup>3</sup>

Passing on once more; from among the "grain words" we select a group which has proved of extraordinary fertility in the past, and is bringing forth fruit to the present hour: *krino*, and its relatives. *Krino* signifies primarily to "separate by sifting"—a meaning preserved in the old Greek *krimmon*, coarsely-ground barleymeal, the Latin *cribrum*, "sieve," and the Anglo-Saxon

<sup>1</sup> *Metrios kai bebaios*—in Professor Jowett's translation, "safe and harmonious."

<sup>2</sup> Proverbs xxx. 8.

<sup>3</sup> Plato's favourite terms for this idea of just proportion are *metriotes* and *symmetria*; Aristotle's is *mesotes*—a word which we shall examine further on.

*hriddel*, "sieve," whence our own "riddle," something to be found out by sifting (Curtius, 148).

By analogy *krino* is next transferred to the mind and its operations, and comes to mean "pick out, distinguish, choose, test,"—hence "to decide, to judge." Then by degrees there spring up the related words, *krites*, "a judge," one who sifts the "pros and cons" of a question, and decides accordingly; *krisis*, "a distinguishing," hence a decision, a turning-point; *kritikos*, "one able to sift, and test," a critic; *kriterion*, "a rule," or standard by which things may be tested and judged.

The idea running through all these developments is the simple one of separating by sifting, proving, and testing. *Krites*, "judge," sifter of evidence, and *kritikos*, "critic," separator of the beautiful from its imitations, the true from the false, are, in intention, at least, noble words. On *krites*, *kritikos*, *kriterion* has been built up the critical apparatus of both the Old World and the New.

Nay, we must go even further and say that the spirit which developed the "critical" group and its analogue, the "analytical" group (*analūō*, analyse), lay at the root of all science and philosophy.

Philosophy indeed, as Aristotle tells us, began in wonder, but it was not "philosophy" until it had endeavoured to sift the object of wonder, the phenomenon, in order to find out its real nature.

Thus *krino*, "I sift, I test, I judge," stands out as one of those developments peculiarly Hellenic, of the thought processes—the two-edged tools—which contributed both to the rise and the fall of Hellas.

We have already seen one good result of it in action in the manner in which the Greeks examined and tested before receiving foreign cults, the manner in which while adopting certain features they rejected others (p. 2).

In one of its tendencies the *krino*-faculty was nothing less than that which we moderns prize as perhaps our noblest heritage, the right of "private judgment." We have seen also in the case of Socrates how with the Greeks as with ourselves this just and inalienable "right" may become the unjust and intolerant and altogether intolerable "right" to cripple the judgment of others—to the detriment of the whole community. It was this very Socrates who had showed his countrymen and the whole thinking world to the end of time, how this double-edged tool, the critical faculty, may be safely and wisely handled. Begin at home, he said—sift and test yourselves, your own motives, your own thoughts.

Through the whole teaching of Socrates, and his disciple Plato, there runs like a golden thread the axiom of the wise man, the golden inscription at Delphi—"Know thy self!" Here is the safeguard, for "Know thy self!" means to every honest thinking soul, "Know thy limitations." The account which Socrates gave of himself was simply this: "Socrates, the man who knows nothing, and who knows that he knows nothing"—as he ought to know it. Socrates, like St. Paul, knew that he only knew "in part." When the right of private judgment begins at the wrong end—the right of judging what lies outside one's self—it degenerates, as with the accusers of Socrates, into the right of private pre-judgment, the right of private prejudice. And yet, Socrates and Plato would have contended to the very last for the right of freedom of judgment. They gloried in it, as does every one who has a thought worth thinking.

And now, to see how another just thinker of Hellas would have the critical sieve employed, let us listen to Aristotle; himself a critic and a man of science, he knows well the necessity of freedom. Surely every one is entitled to the right of criticism.



Here is Aristotle's simple rule: "Every one," he says, "judges well (*krinei*) of things which he *knows*, and of these he is a good critic (*krites*). In particular subjects, then, the man of particular cultivation will judge, and in general the man of general cultivation" (Arist., *Eth. N.*, I. iii. 5).

Here again we find limitations, and more than appear on the surface. Not only is "knowledge" required, but "cultivation"; the "cultivated man," let us note, is simply the *pepaideumenos*, "the trained, instructed, disciplined man"—all three meanings are wrapped up in the word. Hence, we can see that in the opinion of, at least, the Makers of Hellas, the mere possession of the critical faculty, or even the possession of freedom to use it, did not make a "private judgment" always a true one. Knowledge and self-knowledge, training and self-training, these are the preliminary essentials for the forming of right judgment.

The criterion of life—the true sieve for testing it, and its pleasures—says Plato, lies in three things—Experience, Wisdom, Reason (*Empeiria*, *Phronesis*, *Logos*) (Plato, *Rep.*, 582, 583). Would that we all possessed them!

Such are some of the fruits that sprang from watching the "sifting of the barley" in the dim dark ages past.

Again we pass on to another phase of Greek life, from activity in analysis to activity in synthesis, in building up—the development of *Technē*, of skill in handicraft, in the widest sense of art. Its beginnings we cannot trace, they are lost in the night of time; for certain it is that the Aryans took with them into their historic homes an elementary acquaintance with various arts (see *Appendix*). Even in Greece, however, art in the highest sense takes its rise from humble starting-points—the carpenter's bench, the kneading of the clay for the making of the household pots.

Let us glance at the former, for in Greece, as in Egypt, the carpenter stands at the head of the men of skill. The *tekton* (literally, "producer, fashioner, maker") it is who not only constructs the house and its furniture, but builds the ships. In primitive days, as we have seen, each man was his own *tekton*—tree-feller, carpenter, joiner, builder, shipwright, all in one—and although in Homer the *tektones* have become a distinct class, yet pioneers do not even now disdain to take axe and saw in hand. Odysseus makes his own bridal-chamber by choice, his own raft by necessity; Paris has himself built the fair palace to which he brings Helen, with the help of the best men that are *tektones* in deep-soiled Troy-land; and these build for him a chamber, and a hall, and a courtyard (*Iliad*, xv. 313 *et seq.*).

One thing, however, we should bear in mind, viz., that although in Homeric days the Greeks are just themselves beginning the struggle upwards in all technical arts, yet that they are quite familiar with works of real art; the treasures of Mycenæ (see *ante*) have proved this, to say nothing of the numerous allusions to art-works in the Homeric poems. That they knew the distinction between *empeiria*, "rule of thumb" (our good friend "experience" in his old age), and *technē*, working on an intelligent system which is open to new contrivances, it is perhaps allowable to believe, for we read of a man, shaping a ship's timbers with *technē* (*Iliad*, iii. 61), i.e. with a skill that is *not* derived solely from tradition. Of course, as we can easily suppose, a word so fertile as *technaomai*, to contrive, to execute cleverly, "cunningly" in the old sense, soon came amongst a quick-witted people to be used as "cunningly" in the modern sense. Our own noble word "craft"—strength—has suffered the same humiliation. Such metamorphoses are inevitable.

Let us rather dwell on the simple days when the *tekton* is an all-important man; his implements in good repute. In early times kings and chieftains use

his axe; in later days, philosophers are glad to borrow his ruler. The *kanon* of the carpenter!—how many things has it regulated and ruled since the days when it measured the high-tressed oaks of the forest! Of how many noble things in the moral, intellectual, and spiritual worlds has it become the standard! To Aristotle, the good man, *spoudaios*—(literally, the man in earnest)—is in himself, as it were, the rule and measure (*kanon* and *metron*) of things morally to be desired and followed (*Eth. N.*, III. iv. 5).

Again, the writers of the classical age became to later Greece the canon, or measure, of intellectual excellence, as the canon of Holy Writ has become to ourselves the rule of faith and practice.

Let us note, however, the primary sense of the word; it is very significant—"a straight bar or rod which keeps other things straight." In this sense it is used by Homer; <sup>1</sup> the *kanones* were two bars placed across the hollow of the shield to serve as arm-rods, through which the warrior passed his arm, and thus held his shield.

Let us apply the metaphor to ourselves. The component parts of our great canon of Scripture may be said to be, as it were, the *kanones* whereby we may lay hold of that shield, the right use of which—as of the "tough targe" in the *melée*—makes the stout-hearted warrior (*Iliad*, vii. 238, *et seq.*) the Shield of Faith. "The Eternal God is thy Refuge"; "Underneath are the Everlasting Arms"—here are two grand canons, straight as straight can be, for they are the words of Him who cannot lie. Shall we leave our hold of these because, forsooth, they are "out of date," "unfashionable"? Is fashion the umpire on the battlefield? Shall we relax our grasp and fare like that renegade among true men—the *aspidapobles*, the thrower-down of his shield, the runaway? Nay, let us hold by our *kanones*, they have stood the test of the ages. "To right, to left!" turn our shield as we may or must, in the hardest battle of life it will protect us, if—we hold fast by our *kanones*. That is the lesson which the little word has travelled down the ages to teach us. Like the shield and the *kanones* of old Nestor so are our shield and our *kanones* throughout of fine gold, "and the fame thereof now reacheth unto heaven" (*Iliad*, viii. 192).

But we have forgotten!—the carpenter is not only the up-rearer of straight posts, but he is also the constructor, the framer, and fitter-in—our join-er, a word more noble a great deal than we of this century are apt to think. In his constructive capacity the *tekton* is the special favourite of Athena Ergane, Mistress of all works, arts, and handicrafts; from her his skill was believed to flow. Thus we read in the Fifth Book of the *Iliad* (59 *et seq.*) of one *Phereklos*, the son of Tekton (the framer), the son of Harmon (the joiner), who had built the ships for Paris, and with his hands wrought all manner of cunning works,<sup>2</sup> for Pallas Athena loved him above others.

The constructive functions of the *tekton* brought forth a fine series of words, among which the most noticeable is *harmonia*. Who could suppose that harmony, that sweetest of words, both in sound and sense, came to life amid the cutting and carving, the framing and fitting, the rasping, aggravating noise of the carpenter's bench? Yet so it is. Harmony, sweet, true, and humble, will not disclaim her origin; which is simply—a "fastening of some kind, a means of joining," the joining consummated. Disclaim her origin! Why should she be ashamed of it? Harmony is all essential. Withdraw the

<sup>1</sup> The carpenter's rule in Homer is the *stathme*.

<sup>2</sup> *Dædala*, "cunning works." From *dædalos*, "cunningly wrought," comes as substantive, *Dædalos*, the cunning worker, the artist, the man who first gave to statues the appearance of life by keeping their feet apart, a word belonging to the same class as *Tekton* and *Harmon* above.



fastening, and your ship, your house, will fall to pieces. Withdraw *Harmonia*, your house will be the house divided against itself, which, in the nature of things, cannot stand. So saith He, who Himself once upon a time worked at the carpenter's bench, He who is Himself *harmonia*, that which linketh together all things sweet and strong and true.

In Homer, we find the word used both in the primary and later derived sense. It is by the aid of wedges and "harmonies" (*Od.*, v. 248) of some sort that Odysseus joins his twenty trees together to form the raft whereon he sails away from Calypso's Isle, that he may return to his dear native land.

Then, by a natural transference, it meant a mental union or joining together, a covenant. Thus when Hector, before the fatal combat with Achilles, would urge the latter to a mutual agreement regarding the giving up of the body of the one destined to fall, he says, "Let us pledge us by the gods, for they are the best witnesses and overseers of covenants" (harmonies) (*Iliad*, xxii. 254).

Next it is used of Law and established Order, as when, in the *Prometheus* of Æschylus (551), the chorus bids the martyred Titan remember that

"No scheme by mortals laid  
The harmony of Zeus shall e'er transgress."

Then we find it as a proper name in "large-eyed *Harmonia*," that consort of old Cadmus of Thebes under whose rule Music and Letters, or, as some interpret the legend, "Peace among citizens and civilisation," first developed. (See *ante*, under Thebes.)

Finally, it is used of Music, although not in the modern sense. Thus, Plato says that a song or ode (*melos*) consists of three parts—the words, the melody (*harmonia*), and the rhythm (*Rep.*, 398D). Harmony would seem, therefore, to have been simply a musical strain, the "linked sweetness" of sound joining sound by following it, rather than that "fitting-in" of part with part which we moderns understand by "harmony."

That words so exceedingly rich in meaning as *harmonia* and her sisters should have been welcome to the philosophers we can readily understand. With Plato *harmonia*, and *eu-armostia*, "fair harmony," especially, play a part so important that we must reserve this for consideration in connection with another group of words.

Before, however, passing on to this—our last—let us glance briefly at some of the names given by the Greeks to their workers. They are of great interest.

(1) *Demiurgus*, "a worker for the people," is the first we know of, and a grand word it is. It shows us work, honest, manual work, held in repute and honoured; for amongst the *demiurgi* mentioned by Homer—the seer, the healer of ills (physician), the divine minstrel, who can delight with his songs, is also mentioned our friend, the *tekton*, the worker in timber. These are the men who are welcome the wide world over (*Od.*, xvii. 383 *et seq.*). *Demiurgus* next appears as a magistrate, a worker for the people in another sense. Finally the name is applied by Plato and others to God as the great WORKER for the people. From first to last *demiurgus*, then, has a noble record.

(2) The second is a very delightful word—*Cheironax*, "king of his hands." Such a word could only have proceeded from a nation of artists. Think of it! To be king of one's hands, with perfect command over muscle and nerve, so that both shall carry out at once the behest of the thinking brain! Is not this the aim of every artist, be he musician, painter, or sculptor—this perfect mastery of *techné*?

But *cheironax*, alas! and another beautiful word, *cheiro-technes*, "the man with art-in-his-hands," fell, became degraded and sullied, like many other noble words, by everyday use, and finally sank nearly to the level of our third word,

(3) *Banausos*, literally "a worker by fire," the follower of a merely mechanical art—hence a fellow of the baser sort, vulgar, and ignoble in his tastes.

What a fall is here! From *Demiurgos*, the honoured, eagerly-welcomed guest, to *banausos*, the poor, illiterate furnace-man, only known as one of the many—only brought into polite literature, in such a work as Aristotle's *Ethics*, to point a moral, and be dismissed with scorn and disgust. Here, certainly, we have a retrograde experiment, the causes of which one has not far to seek. Herodotus (ii. 167) infers that his countrymen had learned from the "barbarians," Thracians, Persians, &c., who held the warrior class only in esteem, to look down upon the craftsman. The true reason for the change, however, would seem to be that manual work in all shapes had been relegated to slaves, and hence become dishonouring to the freeman.

When we come, now, to the group of words denoting "Beauty" and the "Beautiful," we are almost baffled in the attempt to grasp them, so much do they enfold. In attempting, therefore, to unfold their meaning, Hesiod's rule must be our guide—"a part must suffice for the whole."

One word, then, let us take as the representative of Greek feeling—a word very small and not at all picturesque, but enshrining within itself all that is essentially and peculiarly Hellenic—to *kallos*, "beauty." In its origin Curtius connects the word with the Gothic *hails* (= hale, "sound,") and from the frequency with which the word itself and the prefix *kalli* are applied to streams of running water, it is not unreasonable to suppose that in the beginning personal beauty meant simply health—the condition of body brought about by a personal acquaintance with pure water and invigorating breezes, by friendship with the Muses, Nymphs, and guardians fair of bright sparkling springs. This meaning holds good for more than one of the *kallos* family—*kallyno*, e.g., signifies not only "adorn" but "cleanse," and such an association would seem to be hinted at in Homer's account of the beautifying of Penelope by Athena, where it is said that the goddess "first with immortal beauty washed<sup>1</sup> her fair face" (*Od.*, xviii. 192). Whatever the origin of the word, certain it is that the Greeks regarded beauty as a something bestowed on the individual from without, a divine gift, and a very precious gift, surpassing well-nigh every other.

This idea runs through the whole of Greek literature. In Homer when Helen, fair among women, appears on the tower in her veiled beauty, the Trojan elders speak among themselves softly (as though held in awe by it) the winged words: "No shame is it (*ou nemesis*) that Trojans and well-greaved Achæans should, for such a woman as this, long time suffer woes" (*Iliad*, iii. 154 *et seq.*).

Herodotus enumerates a fine form as one of the things which make the happy man (i. 32), and the historian is confirmed by the philosopher. Aristotle, too, does not see how any one is likely to be happy if he is very ugly in person. "There are certain things," he says, "whose absence takes the bloom off our happiness, as good birth, the blessing of children, personal beauty" (*Eth. N.*, I. viii. 16).

To such a pitch did the Greeks carry this passion for beauty that when a certain Philippos, the handsomest man of his day, fell on the battlefield, a shrine was erected over his sepulchre, and he was propitiated by sacrifice—

<sup>1</sup> Voss's rendering. The word is *kathêre*, "made pure."



accorded hero-worship—solely, as Herodotus tells us, on account of his beauty (v. 47).

All this, from our modern pinnacle, appears very absurd and very superficial. Well, we are not going to defend the Beauty-cult; but—if we must have a false god—let us choose Beauty and worship her under the clear blue heavens, rather than sacrifice to Mammon in the grimy, polluted, man-to-machine-reducing cities of our own day.

However, our Hellenes are not so superficial as they seem, for, as we have already seen, there are qualities which can outweigh beauty in their esteem: eloquence, as in the case of Odysseus' orator (p. 83); courage and intellect combined as in the case of Odysseus himself (p. 83); the evidence of a noble nature, as in the case of Socrates. Alcibiades compared the master to Silenus, one of the little Satyr figures then in vogue—figures which, externally rude and uncouth, were found to be mere cases, enclosing some precious work of Art. So even the beauty-worshipping Greeks could see that the outer tabernacle in the case of Socrates enshrined that noblest work of God—a beautiful soul.

The connection, however, between exterior and interior beauty, was pushed by the Greeks to an extent which, unless we think the matter out, must needs repel us. When, for instance, Theognis tells us (*Theog.*, 15) that at the famous wedding of Cadmus and Harmonia, the Graces appeared and sang in honour of the event, and that the burden of their theme was this: "What is beautiful, that is lovable, what is not beautiful, that is not lovable," we moderns feel, as the Germans put it, *befremdet*, altogether estranged.

Looked at in connection with the occasion, however, the wedding of Music and Letters, the sentiment rights itself. In the domain of Art the beautiful is supreme.

Sappho goes a step further in declaring that "the Beautiful is also good—the Good is also beautiful"—a statement which *per se* and in the abstract is profoundly true. In the concrete, it is rather what was expected from the possessor of a beautiful form than what was realised by experience. As Plato puts it: "When a beautiful soul harmonises with a beautiful body, and the two are cast in one mould, that will be the fairest of sights to him who has an eye to see it" (*Rep.*, 402D).

This union of beauty and goodness the Greeks summed up in *kalokagathos*,<sup>1</sup> a word which expressed their ideal of the Perfect Man, the man as he ought to be, noble in person, noble in soul.

So deep-rooted was this association between goodness and beauty that the same word came to be applied indifferently to both—to *kalon* is both beauty and goodness, nobility of soul. Then naturally, as in the Logos, the inward gift, reason, expresses itself outwardly by the word, so in *to kalon* the inward beauty manifests itself outwardly in noble deeds.

"For the thing that one hath well said goeth forth with a voice unto everlasting; over fruitful earth and beyond the sea hath the light of fair deeds shined, unquenchable for ever" (*Isthm.*).

So sang Pindar, rejoicing in the mission of a poet, the building together of noble words, that through them noble deeds may flash out as the beams of God upon the darkness around, or shine on with the radiance (*aktis*) of the sun at noonday, unquenchable for ever.

Finally, we arrive at the great exponent of the Beautiful for all times and

<sup>1</sup> *Kalos-kai-agathos*, "beautiful and good." In the best writers the word is not so far contracted, it appears as *kalos kagathos*. In early times it seems to have denoted the aristocrats, the noble-men, as distinct from the many. Later, in the beautiful-good, the moral sense ruled.

all ages—Plato. The Beautiful to Plato is entirely synonymous with the Good. It is not possible for him to conceive of anything really beautiful which is not also good, morally good. Nevertheless, Plato does not place Beauty above Goodness—his idea, rather, is best expressed (as Professor Jowett has well pointed out) in the passage in the *Philebus*, where he says (65A) that: “If we are not able to hunt the Good (*to agathon*) with one idea only, with three we may take our prey—Beauty, Symmetry, Truth (*Kallei kai summetriâ kai altheiâ*).”

Beauty is thus in one sense a means to an end; in another, Beauty is the end of all ends, for Beauty in its perfection to Plato is simply the vision of God.

Reserving this great idea for another part of our inquiry, we may well sum up our minor ideas on the Beautiful in that most striking passage in the *Republic* (401 C.D., Jowett's trans., p. 87 *et seq.*), where the influence of Beauty as a power in the training of the young is shown. We give it in the version of Professor Jowett—a version which rivals the original in charm:—

“We would not have our guardians grow up amid images of moral deformity, as in some noxious pasture, and there browse and feed upon many a baneful herb and flower day by day, little by little, until they silently gather a festering mass of corruption in their own soul. Let our artists rather be those who are gifted to discern the true nature of the beautiful and graceful; then will our youth dwell in a land of health, amid fair sights and sounds, and receive the good in everything; and beauty, the effluence of fair works, shall flow into the eye and ear, like a health-giving breeze from a purer region, and insensibly draw the soul from earliest years into likeness and sympathy with the beauty of reason.”

How many ages passed—how many experiments were made—before this fine conception of Beauty, as health of soul, developed out of the old natural conception of Beauty as health of body? And yet the connection between the two is real and intimate.

This short inquiry, then, into the growth of words as “symbols of ideas” has helped to reveal to us much that went to the Making of Hellas. The Hellenes themselves have disclosed this secret. The *nemo* group showed us the growth of settled Order; *mythos* and *muse*, the development of Imagination; the *metron* group, the intense value in Greek eyes of Proportion and Symmetry; and the *krino* group, the power and bounds of the Critical Faculty—whilst in *harmonia* and *to kalon* we have seen the very flower and charm of Greek thought. How many ages did these word-experiments take in working out? What interval lies between the prattling myth of the forest-stream and Plato's “beauty of reason”? God knows.

**Words made Ready for the Master's Use.**—We now turn to another class of words, bearers of ideas which never came to full fruition in classical times. There are not a few Greek words, and those amongst the most significant and beautiful, to which may be applied with truth Goethe's saying concerning the *Symposium* of Plato; it contained, he said, more than its author dreamt of. So there are Greek words with a meaning latent in them, a depth not suspected by the men who composed them. Such expressions were, as Nägelsbach has well said, “*vessels made ready*” for use hereafter (*Nachhom. Theol.*, p. 239).

Look, for instance, at two very noble words—enthusiasm and philanthropy. If etymology speak “the truth” about words, then indeed is *enthusias-mos* a very king amongst words, for it means “God-within-us” (*ho theos en hēmin*). It was used by the Greeks, both in the literal sense as “divine inspiration,” and as expressing the effect produced upon the mind by music or poetry. A



wonderful instance of its application in a way which includes both meanings, is afforded by that passage in the *Ion* (533 D.E.; Jowett's translation), where Plato compares the poet or the rhapsodist and his hearers to successive links in a chain of magnets:—

"There is a divinity moving you, like that contained in the stone which Euripides calls a magnet. . . . This stone not only attracts iron rings, but also imparts to them a similar power of attracting other rings; and sometimes you may see a number of pieces of iron and rings suspended from one another so as to form quite a long chain; and all of them derive their power of suspension from the original stone. In like manner, the Muse first of all inspires men herself; and from these inspired persons a chain of other persons is suspended, who take the inspiration. For all good poets, epic as well as lyric, compose their beautiful poems not by art, but because they are inspired and possessed."

Such, then, was the Greek idea of enthusiasm—an influence as it were, magnetic, emanating from God Himself, and attracting to Himself through the poet, rhapsodist<sup>1</sup> or musician as first link, the hearers or readers as last links, in the chain.

The passage is thrown off, with the usual hits at the poets, in the "ironical" manner under which Plato often hides his deepest feelings; but no idea has ever been given to the world more truly representing the ideal of the artist who glories in his Art. Be he first link in the chain—creator as poet, composer, painter, sculptor, maker of beauty in any shape; or second link—organ through whom the creations of genius become realities, rhapsodist, actor, singer, executant: to be the means of revealing the Divine to man, of linking man to God is surely the noblest and highest of ideals!

"Yea!" respond the Ions of our own day, "O Socrates, thou hast well spoken."

Turning now to that large-souled word *philanthropia*, "love of man," we are apt to picture to ourselves, on first coming across it, Hellenic John Howards and Elizabeth Frys going up and down the world doing good to all men alike, simply because they were *men*, "upward-lookers," stamped with the image of God. Greek philanthropy, however, was something rather different.

It meant in general, kindness and courtesy as opposed to haughtiness, malice, cruelty—a meaning, of course, in its degree not to be lightly passed over. Again, we must note that the great instance of *philanthropia* on which the Athenians prided themselves was a religious one, viz., that they admitted all Hellenes (including Hellenic slaves) to the Eleusinian Mysteries (Isocr., *Paneg.*, 29) instead of confining initiation to members of their own race—certainly a very remarkable example of that freedom from prejudice, that large-mindedness, to which we have so often referred as characteristic of the Athenians. In its way this use of the word was really a foreshadowing of the grand capabilities wrapped up within it.

Nevertheless, we may not overlook the fact that barbarians, i.e. all non-Hellenes, were strictly excluded from the Mysteries; only through fear of the conqueror was the right of initiation extended to the Romans.

We must not, however, imagine that the Greeks had not arrived at the perception that "man," "fellow-man," meant something more than "brother," something more than "neighbour," more even than "fellow-citizen." It is recorded of Aristotle that when he was reproached for having done a kindness to a person unworthy of it, he replied, "I did it, not to the man, but to humanity" (*tô anthrōpinô*)—as our German brethren tersely put it, "Nicht

<sup>1</sup> The rhapsodists were those who recited the Homeric poems at the Panathenæa and other festivals.

dem Menschen, sondern der Menschlichkeit" (Stobaeus, quoted by Schmidt, *Ethik.*, ii. 277).

Nevertheless, of "humanity" and "philanthropy" in the sense in which we now use the words, the ancient world knew nothing. An Aristotle might pay a debt to "humanity" by an act of humanity; he might even pay tribute to humanity by admitting that there was "room for some kind of friendship" between master and slave, "in so far, that is to say, as the slave deserves the name man." How far in his opinion the slave deserved the name "man," however, Aristotle had just been good enough to explain in the sentences preceding the last, where he puts the slave on a level with the horse or the ox, or lower still, with the household chattels.

"The slave," he says, "is a living tool; the tool is a lifeless slave" (*Eth. N.*, VIII. xi. 6-7).

A Euripides, indeed, might see and nobly maintain that a slave could be as good as, nay, far better than, his master; but the world at large only shrugged its shoulders, laughed at the absurdity, pointed to the philosophers, and continued to use, misuse, and abuse its "living tools" to the end. As for such wretched creatures as prisoners of war, criminals, outcasts, the sick, the dying!—here and there a kindly soul extended to them the helping hand, for the image of God was never wholly obliterated in man, justice and pity have always been in hiding somewhere on earth, even in the darkest times. But, in general, such unfortunates lay altogether outside the pale of society; they were "passed by" as they lay in their nakedness and agony, by the Levite, the man of cultivation, the *pepaideumenos*, and the Scribe, the man of refinement, the *charieis*. How could such miserable objects excite *philanthropia*? What possible link could connect them with "enthusiasm"?

Not until the fulness of times was the answer supplied. Not until Emmanuel—God-with-us—had tabernacled among men, did the true Enthusiasm—God-in-us—develop. Not until "the kindness and *philanthropia* of God our Saviour" had appeared<sup>1</sup> did the old philanthropy enlarge its bounds. Not until the Son of Man had been "lifted up" and drawn by force of love all things good and true to Himself, *the Magnet*,<sup>2</sup> did Enthusiasm and Philanthropy become linked together as fellow-workers. From the Cross comes that magnetic chain which, beginning in Dying Love, proceeding through the links of devotion and gratitude to the Master, and ending in the service of Man, constitutes the true Enthusiasm of Humanity.

Such words as "enthusiasm" and "philanthropy" have passed into the body of Christianity. Others, again, have been taken up into its very soul and essence. Among these are words which will rise to the memory of every reader, words which cannot be fitly discussed here. We can only briefly point to the sublime name applied by St. John to our Lord as the Word—the Outer Symbol of the Inner Thought of the Father—the *Logos*, or to that wonderful concentration of ideas found in the word *charis*, with its threefold meaning of charm and loveliness, favour and kindness, thanksgiving and gratitude, a threefold meaning of which our rendering "grace" is full to overflowing but which still pulsates in deepest, truest life in the original in the Christian *Eucharis-t*.

To vary slightly Nägelsbach's simile: these and kindred words stood ready, like the water-pots at the Wedding-Feast in Cana of Galilee, filled by the servants up to the brim with water which was indeed refreshing and not to be

<sup>1</sup> Tit. iii. 4. The word rendered "love" is, in the original, *philanthropia*.

<sup>2</sup> St. John xii. 32. The Lord's words are, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto Myself." The verb here translated "draw" means also to "attract," and is used specially to denote the attraction of the magnet (*Eur., Fr.*, 571).



despised, but which needed the power of the MASTER to transform it into the "good wine" that, coming last, should put new life into fainting humanity.

**The Dialects.**—Thus far we have spoken of the Greek "language," but in strictness, even during the Classical period, there was no common Hellenic language, nor did this arise until the time of Alexander the Great. Before this epoch we can, with accuracy, speak only of Hellenic "dialects."

Strange as it may seem, this fact is easily accounted for by the circumstances under which the Greek races developed, the isolated cantons in which each clan grew up into maturity, shut off by mountain walls from frequent intercourse with its neighbours. Hence, just as there was originally no one Hellenic nation, but a congeries of independent peoples, so was there originally no one Hellenic tongue, but a diversity of dialects corresponding to the divisions of race. These may be grouped as follows:—

(1) We have two main divisions, *Æolic* and *Ionic*.

(2) Then other two great branches closely connected with these, *Doric* with *Æolic*, *Attic* with *Ionic*.

(3) Lastly, numerous sub-dialects, allied to one or other of the great streams, and belonging rather to the spoken idiom than the written language.<sup>1</sup>

Although, as we have said, *Doric* is closely related to *Æolic*, yet we must not suppose that it was a daughter of the latter. The dialects stood to each other in the relation of sisters. Each Greek race transformed independently that rich inheritance of the Aryan mother-tongue; each is more or less faithful to it; each imparts to its own dialect a colouring peculiar to itself. That these dialects were fixed before the great migrations (p. 123) is proved by the fact that every separate body of colonists, whether belonging to the *Æolian*, *Dorian*, or *Ionian* race, carried the peculiarities of their mother-speech with them to their new home, and these peculiarities were retained by the colonists in some cases longer than by the mother-country. Of course, there was very much that was common to all the dialects; but again there were well-marked diversities, especially in the use of the vowels.<sup>2</sup>

Each of the dialects expresses in a curious way the race-characteristics of the people among whom it originated.

1. *Æolic*.—The *Æolians* were, as we have seen, a chivalrous race, given to knightly sports and hospitality, to music and song. Hence, poetry was early cultivated amongst them. The original *Iliad*, the nucleus around which the whole poem as we have it gathered, the *Achilleid*, or story of Achilles, prince of the Thessalian Achaia (see *ante*, p. 49), is held to be most probably of Achaean and Thessalian origin. It grew up amongst the *Æolians*, and, as may

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus (i. 42) mentions no fewer than four varieties of *Ionic* as spoken by the Greeks of the twelve *Ionian* cities of Asia Minor. The following grouping of the dialects of Greece and the Colonies (by Brugmann, *Germ. Gram.*, p. 12) is interesting, as showing the extent of variation which existed:—

1. *Ionian-Attic*: (a) *Ionian*; (b) *Attic*.

2. *Doric*: (a) *Laconia* with *Tarentum* and *Heracleia*; (b) *Messenia*; (c) *Argolis* and *Ægina*; (d) *Corinth* and *Corcyra* (*Corfu*); (e) *Megara* and *Byzantium*; (f) the *Peloponnesian Colonies* of *Sicily*; (g) *Crete*; (h) *Thera*, *Melos*, and *Cyrene*; (i) *Rhodes*, with *Gela* and *Acragas*; (k) other *Dorian Islands* of the *Ægean Sea*, *Carpathos*, &c.

3. *North-Western Greek*: (a) *Phocis*; (b) *Locris*; (c) *Ætolia*; (d) *Acarmania*; (e) *Phthiotis* and the district of the *Ænians*; (f) *Epeirus* and, perhaps (g), *Achaia*.

4. *Æolic*: (a) *Lesbos* and *Æolic Asia Minor*; (b) *Northern Thessaly*; (c) *Beotia*.

5. *Ælian*: possibly belonging to the *North-Western dialects*.

6. *Arcadian-Cyprian*.

7. *Pamphylian*.

All these dialects are most purely represented by inscriptions.

<sup>2</sup> Thus *Muse* was *Mois-a* in *Æolic*, *Mosa* in *Doric*, and *Moûsa* in *Ionian*, the same norm or germ being common to all.

be assumed, was carried by Æolian colonists to Asia Minor, where it was further developed, not by Æolians, but by Ionians.<sup>1</sup> The first beginnings of the higher poetry, as distinct from folk-songs, were, therefore, we must suppose, made by the Æolians, and equally must we suppose that the Æolic dialect had been evolved and shaped so as to admit of a certain measure of artistic handling at a very early stage. Nor was the being first in the field the only merit of the Æolians, for that branch of poetry which best suited their emotional nature and their dialect with its broad vowels—lyric poetry—reached its highest development among them. Lesbos was the home, not only of Alcæus but of Sappho.

As to the dialect itself, it may be considered as standing midway between Doric and Ionic; it is softer than Doric, but wanting in the harmony of Ionic. Amongst its many varieties the dialect of Bœotia was the least, that of Lesbos, the most pleasing (Bergk, p. 54).

2. **Doric** is the speech of hardy mountaineers. Like the people who evolved it, it disdained any attempt at compromise, aimed at the greatest possible clearness and precision, kept very true to the old mother-tongue, gave forth its sharp hissing *ss* without the slightest regard to “nerves,”<sup>2</sup> and showed a marked preference for the broad vowels, *a* and *o*. The Dorian was deliberate in all that he did; he took his time to make up his mind about a thing, and when he did speak, it was in a slow, long-drawn-out fashion, that exposed him to the ridicule of the ready-tongued Ionian. Nevertheless the Dorian could hold his own. Reserved as he was, a foe to many words, when he spoke he spoke to the purpose, his “laconic” utterances had their seasoning of salt.

The *brachylogia* (literally, “shortness of speech, brevity”) of the Dorians and especially of the Spartans, became proverbial, and is even attributed by Homer (*Iliad*, iii. 213) to the Achæan Menelaus, as King of Sparta.<sup>3</sup> The basis and reason of this Dorian peculiarity, which showed itself in their love of *apophthegms* (literally, “clear utterance”) and terse sayings, is to be sought in the effort to reveal as much of the inner life as possible, with outward means as few as possible, and so to separate the kernel of thought from its non-essential envelope (Müller, *Die Dorier*, ii. 377).

There was, however, a tender element in the Dorian nature despite its apparent ruggedness, and this shows itself in the love of the people for diminutives, which have in themselves, as Bergk points out, something homely and kindly (“etwas trauliches und gemüthliches”), and this feature of the dialect is not wanting even among the Spartans.

What secrets language discloses to be sure! Imagine the Spartan, as we are wont to picture him, laconic and stern, ready for the battle, with scarlet mantle, flowing hair, and glittering armour—imagine him, indulging in

<sup>1</sup> This is the probable history of the *Iliad*. The language bears so strong an Æolic tinge, that Ficke supposed the whole poem to have been originally composed in Æolic and afterwards Ionised.

<sup>2</sup> This fondness for the harsh *ss* (probably pronounced *sh*) was, however, confined to the speech of daily life. Sibilants are not agreeable in music, hence the hard *ss* was banished from the written language and from the Doric lyric choruses (Bergk, p. 93, 104).

<sup>3</sup> Of the *brachylogia* of the Spartans Herodotus (p. 46) gives an amusing instance. A body of Samians who had been expelled by the tyrant Polycrates, went to Sparta to ask for help. When admitted to the presence of the magistrates, they made an elaborate speech, as people very much in earnest are apt to do, setting forth at length their troubles and necessities. The Spartans heard them to the end, and then replied coolly that they had forgotten the first half of the speech, and did not understand the rest. The Samians took the hint, went away, and re-presented themselves next day with a sack, and the words “The sack wants filling!” This time the Spartans condescended to understand the situation, but they remarked that the word “sack” was quite superfluous.



diminutives, little pet names! Truly we do not need to be told that the influence of women was great in Sparta.

It will be seen from the table of dialects given on p. 109 that the Doric was the most widespread of all the dialects. Wherever the strong, self-restrained Dorian appeared, the process of "Doricising"—the supremacy of the Doric tongue and customs—inevitably followed. Hence, we find Doric holding the first place not only in Peloponnesus, but in Italy, and Sicily, and even in Crete, an island which seems, so far as our knowledge goes, to have been entirely Doricised, although the population was very mixed and but a moderate proportion actually subject to the Dorian rule.

3. **Ionic** is the tongue of dwellers amid the mild sea-breezes. In softness, grace, and refinement it far surpasses the harsher Doric and Æolic. Ionic diligently prunes away all the roughness of the mother-tongue; the long *e* appears instead of the Doric and Æolic *a*,<sup>1</sup> and in wealth of vowels Ionic exceeds her sisters. In this, as in other respects, she offers the most decided contrast to Doric.

The oldest form in which we know Ionic (or any other dialect) is in the language of the *Iliad*, but, as we have seen, Ionic is here mingled with Æolic. The language of Homer is, in fact, an art-dialect, the basis of which is the old Ionic, but which mixes the forms of different times and different dialects, and was never and nowhere the common language of daily life (Brugmann, *Gr. Gram.*, p. 13). By the language of Homer, of the *Iliad*, the first literary record of Hellas (and of Europe), the whole poetry of later times was influenced. In what is known as the "younger" or later Ionian, prose was also first developed and perfected by such writers as Herodotus, and Hippocrates, and the philosopher Democritus. Hence the art-forms introduced by the Ionians, both in poetry and prose, became models for all the other races, and Ionic acquired an influence intellectually, compared to which that of Doric, with its wide geographical area, sinks into insignificance.

4. **Attic**.—And now we come to the fourth dialect. As a literary dialect, the youngest of all, but destined, like the youngest son in the fairy tales, to outstrip all rivals—Attic.

At first, so far as our scanty knowledge goes, Attic does not seem to have been essentially distinct from Ionic; but as early as the time of Peisistratus the separation is quite apparent. Bergk (*op. cit.*, i. 72) traces—and with great reason—what is nothing short of a puzzling phenomenon, the rise of Attic, to the political circumstances of the little State. The widening of the Athenian constitution and the reception of so many new citizens by Solon and Cleisthenes, were certainly, as he points out, not without influence. Still more effectually worked the result of these generous measures—the strengthened tone and manly feeling that animated all the members of the newly-organised community, which thenceforward developed with a vigour unparalleled in history. The Athenians, in their new-born consciousness of a strength always latent, began to be ashamed of the relationship with their voluptuous degenerate Asiatic brethren. Everything distinctively Ionic was set aside, and the reaction showed itself, not only in dress, but in speech. Contractions were made with a firm hand. For instance, a long drawling form like Athenāā was shortened to Athenā, and so on (Brugmann, *Els.*, § 603). The feminine long *e* of the Asiatic Ionic is dropped and the over-fullness of vowels strictly moderated. The Athenians, however, did not make the mistake of going back entirely to old forms. The old forms would not have sufficed for the new ideas with which the air was full. The Athenians went their own way; they steered a

<sup>1</sup> For example, "truth" in the Ionic dialect is *alētheia*, in the Doric *alatheia*.

middle course in avoiding equally excessive harshness and excessive softness, and thus arose that grandest of all tongues, ancient or modern, the language of Plato and Demosthenes.

The history of the dialect is, therefore, the history of the people. It appears strange that at so late a date a dialect should arise as the result of conscious effort and reflection, of deliberate selection or rejection of forms. Nevertheless, we must bear in mind that those who moulded Attic had the advantage of writing, and of free choice amongst many forms and modes of expression already in existence. Hence Attic is pre-eminently a "literary" tongue.

**Place of the Dialects in Literature.**—Although, as we have seen, the dialects differed in many points from one another, yet they had naturally, springing from the same mother-tongue, a very great deal in common, and it is supposed that from the beginning every Greek could understand every other Greek (Grote, *Hist.*, ii. 165).

Two factors helped greatly in diffusing a common type of language. These were (1) the great National Festivals, which brought together Greeks from every part of Hellas, continental and insular, mother-cities, and out-lying colonies; and (2) the Homeric poems, which were invaluable for keeping together the sympathies of the Hellenic world. Thus, Dio Chrysostom (*Orat.*, xxxvi. 78) tells us that the inhabitants of Olbia (or Borysthenes) could repeat the *Iliad* by heart, although their own dialect was partly barbarised, and their city ruined.

In the Classical period, moreover, the dialects must have been familiar to all, for boys learned the older poets by heart at school, and every race had had its share in the making of the national literature. This equality of the dialects is, in fact, an undoubted advantage of the Greek language. Each dialect had a special character of its own, and a poet was able to select that dialect which best suited his purpose. The Ionic, with its full soft euphony, was as though made by nature for the epic; the terser Attic for the dialogue of the drama; the broad Æolic-Doric for melic (lyric) poetry. Thus we find Tyrtaeus, the Attic poet who went to the help of the Spartans, composing his elegies in Ionic, his stirring marching songs in Doric. Even in one and the same work, moreover, the poet could vary his dialect—as in the Attic drama, where Doric always holds its own in the chorus.

**How the Dialects were Superseded by a Common Language.**—Finally, after the experimenting of the different peoples of Greece had come to an end—after the genius of Hellenic individuality had spent itself—we find the separate life of the Hellenic States gradually dying out, the peculiarities of race paling and becoming absorbed in a Universal Greece. And the process that went on in the history of the people is traceable also in the history of their speech. The separate dialects were gradually superseded by one of their own number which rose to be the universal language, and that one was—Attic. Why Attic? we ask. Why should Attic have superseded the other dialects, formerly her equals? There were three reasons for the preference of Attic:—

1. In the first place, Athens had become the centre of intellectual life. Here literature reached its highest development. Both in poetry and in prose the Athenians carried forward to perfection what the Ionians of Asia had begun. The drama, oratory in its highest form, had their home in Athens.

2. Then, secondly, from the very beginning there was a kind of universality about the Athenians themselves; they opened their doors readily to foreigners<sup>1</sup> and their minds to new impressions, and this characteristic stamped itself upon

<sup>1</sup> In the best days of Athens, the Metœci, or permanent foreign settlers, constituted about half of the free citizens.



their language. All the other dialects retained their own peculiarities and "provincialisms" and were sharply separated one from the other; Attic recalls something of each, has borrowed something from each, without losing her own purity or individuality.

3. The third characteristic which specially fitted Attic to be the universal language is courteousness. Attic is never rough or abrupt; rather than wound the feelings of others, she will seek out a gentle or an apologetic expression.<sup>1</sup> Even what is unattractive in itself, Attic can surround with an atmosphere of grace and beauty.

Thus, from its grand place in literature, from its "universality," from its own undefinable charm, Attic naturally took the lead. That it came to be the universal language of Greece was simply an instance of the "survival of the fittest," and here the "fittest" was, as is usually the case, what has "fitted" itself for its position by dint of hard work, for with all its grace, Attic is distinguished by the strictest attention to rule and law, and rule and law even in literature mean discipline. The horse must not run away with the rider.

So, when isolation had done its work, when many began to run to and fro and knowledge was increased, a common vehicle of thought and intercourse was wanted, and it was found ready to hand in Attic. Of all the dialects Ionic (the most closely related to Attic) was the first to yield, as shown by inscriptions; the process began even so early as the end of the Peloponnesian War: Æolic held out much longer; Doric longest of all. Tough and true to tradition, Doric kept alive in certain districts down to the time of the Roman Empire, but finally it too disappeared before the presence of culture.

Thus Attic conquered the dialects of Greece. Every one who made any claim at all to cultivation tried to express himself in that way which all considered purest and best; and as in society people strove to free themselves from homely dialect, so in writing the advantages of Attic made it the recognised literary medium.

**The Koinē-Hellenistic Greek.**—Finally, when by the conquests of Alexander, the East was thrown open to the influences of the West, and was, so to speak, "colonised" by the Hellenes, Attic achieved a still higher triumph, for it became the universal language of the civilised world. This "colonisation" of the East was a no less glorious work than the colonisation of the coasts of the Mediterranean in the early days of Hellas had been. Not only throughout Asia, in every part of the Persian Empire, but on the shores of the Red Sea, and in Cyrenaica, there sprang up flourishing cities, cities which certainly owed their origin to the thirst for conquest of Alexander and his successors, and their prosperity to the thirst for wealth of private traders, but which became, never-

<sup>1</sup> "To tell a lie," e.g., is in Attic phrase *ouden legein*, "to say nothing." This is by no means what we might perhaps be disposed to consider it, viz., an exculpation of the moral guilt of lying. The real meaning comes out in the sense in which it is used by Socrates in his defence. He does not say bluntly of his accusers that they are telling an untruth concerning him. He simply remarks, "If any one says that this is not my teaching, he says *nothing*" (*ouden legei*). Truth is the Something which will prevail, falsehood is naught.

To take another example, a "simpleton" in Attic parlance is neither a "fool" nor a "natural," he is *euêthês*, "simple-minded, guileless."

Again, liberated slaves were not to be reminded at every turn of their former condition. Hence they are *choris oikountes*, "dwellers apart," i.e. beyond bounds, no longer at the beck and call of a master=gentlemen-at-large.

We are indebted to Bergk for the foregoing examples of Attic courtesy, but it is necessary to add that the position of the *choris oikountes* has not been clearly defined. According to Böckh they were either freedmen or slaves working on their own account and paying over a fixed proportion of their earnings to their master (*Staatsh.*, i. 365).

theless, one and all, centres whence Greek ideas and Greek knowledge, and the Greek language as the vehicle of both, were diffused (Bergk, 82).

Later, a more extraordinary triumph still was in store for Greek—by it Hellas conquered her Roman conquerors. The people of Italy had received the elements of culture, the alphabet, the arts of reading and writing, through the Greeks. Cato, the Roman censor, 234–139 B.C., the hater of Greek ideas in his youth, found himself obliged in his old age to apply himself to the detested language and literature. Cicero and Augustus both knew Greek and had studied in Greece. The first grammar ever written—a grammar which has served as the model and basis of all others—was a grammar of the Greek language, written by Dionysius Thrax (the Thracian) for the use of Roman students, written that the conquerors might learn the language of the conquered. In his time (about 80 B.C.) Greek was the fashion in Rome, and as Quintilius tells us, children learned it before they were taught their mother-tongue (i. 1, 12; Mommsen, *Rom. Gesch.*, Book i. p. 197).

Greek thus became everywhere the language of the educated classes, and so Aristides the orator could boast (*Panath.*, 294) that all cities and races of men had accepted Attic speech and customs. Compared to Attic, the rhetor says, the local dialects were but as the stuttering speech of children—a few words may please us in jest, but we soon have enough of it. Patriotism apart, this was in reality the most famous Hegemony ever won by Athens—the intellectual leadership of the world.

It stands to reason, however, that when Greek became the universal language, not only of the Greek States, but of the educated classes throughout the world, it must gradually have departed more and more from the original standard. “Hellenistic” Greek, the language of those who were not Greeks by birth, could never attain to the purity of strict Attic. We can easily perceive that to the Greek of Phrygians, Carians, Syrians, Jews, and Egyptians, many peculiarities would naturally attach themselves—many provincialisms, solecisms, and “barbarisms” would creep in to vex the soul of Attic purists. Hence, the name *koinē*, which meant at first simply the language “common” to all members of the Greek race, came to signify in its wider acceptance the “common tongue” as opposed to the strict Attic of the Schools. Such a transformation was inevitable. Nevertheless, the gain to the world of the *koinē* was incalculable.

Let us now for a moment just gather up briefly some of the properties of the Greek language, and see for ourselves how it was that it acquired its world-wide supremacy.

**The Result of the Experiment—Greek as an Instrument of Thought.**—The Greek language (as we have seen) is, like every other language, a work of Art, and, therefore, like every work of Art, it must be tested in two ways—by its Form and Contents, exterior and interior qualities.

1. *Form.*—Those of us who do not conceive of language as only a vehicle for concealing thought will say, and rightly, that a grand language is one that shall enable a thinker to express his thoughts with the utmost clearness and precision.

Now, the Greeks, as we know, were wonderfully clear-headed thinkers, and it is not too much to maintain that they owed a good deal in this respect to their language. By its very structure Greek compelled to definiteness of thought.

The *main* structure, as we also know, was not the work of the Greeks themselves, but of their and our forefathers—the old Aryans in bygone ages. The first Græco-Aryans conserved and preserved and imitated scrupulously the



forms handed down to them—forms elaborated by that most wondrous process of agglutination which we have already watched in progress. (See *Appendix*.) The result is that we have in Greek the most perfect specimen of a synthetic or inflexional language, rivalled only by Sanskrit. The modern tendency in language is always towards an analytical mode of expression; we get rid of case-forms and verbal-forms by using prepositions and auxiliary verbs; but by so doing, we lose a great power, viz., that of saying much-in-little. For instance, the Greeks could express by one word, *antiparexein*, an idea which to express fully would require thirteen words in French: “Faire sortir une armée en face de l’ennemi, et la mener contre lui” (Burnouf). It is easy to see that the modern freedom from the restraints of flexions has been gained only by another loss, viz., that of symmetry and a sort of living strength. No one has put this more pithily than K. O. Müller. He is not blind to the beauties of modern languages. Thus English—which, as a mixture of the most different elements, has contrived to dispense with grammatical flexion to a greater extent than any other European tongue—he represents as bearing away from her sisters the palm “for all the purposes of energetic eloquence.” “Nevertheless,” he adds, “no modern European who has realised the impression produced by the wealth of forms in the classical languages, and who has compared with these his mother-tongue, will be able to deny that in the former, the words, clothed with flexions as with muscles and tendons, step out like living bodies, full of expression and character; whilst, in the newer languages, words have shrunk up—to skeletons.”

Then again, we may note that Greek stands unrivalled for the wealth and variety of its forms. Speaking of the verb, G. Curtius (p. 5) calls attention to the astounding wealth of the forms in which it is developed, containing as it does no fewer than 507 separate and distinct forms. The position of Greek in this respect is best seen by a comparison with the sister-languages:—

Gothic	yielding	38	forms
Latin	„	143	„
Greek	„	507	„
Sanscrit	„	891	„

Here Sanscrit seems to bear off the palm, “but,” says Curtius, “we should err if we regarded all the Sanscrit forms as actually existing. Greek hardly comes behind Sanscrit in the number of her verbal forms, and has far finer distinctions of meaning.”

Then, if we inquire how this wealth of form arose, we shall find that it sprang from the effort to give the utmost point and definiteness to the thought to be conveyed. Thus—

1. Greek has not only the Active and the Passive Voices—“I strike,” “I am struck”—but that most individual form, the Middle Voice—“I strike myself.”

2. Greek has not only the Singular and the Plural Numbers, but that most particularising of forms, the Dual Number—“We two,” “you two,” “they two.”

3. Again, Greek in common with Sanscrit has preserved a very special tense, the Aorist, which represents a momentary, in contradistinction to a lasting, action—a point in time, as distinguished from a continuous line (K. O. Müller, p. 7). Just think what life and precision the use of this “single point” tense must impart to a narrative.

We cannot but echo the words of G. Curtius, and say of this “huge system of verbal forms,” begun, indeed, in the old Aryan home, but preserved and

modified in the new home in Greece, that it is "perhaps the most marvellous creation of the language-making mind of man" (G. Curtius, *op. cit.*, 7).

Again, midway between Form and Content, there stands in Greek a curious class of words, the particles, which act as joints or pivots in a sentence, and seem to have been invented for the very purpose of reasoning, defining, pointing a contrast or guarding against misconstruction in the statement of an argument.

Thus, in flexibility, variety, and definiteness of form Greek stands unrivalled. It was all but impossible not to think clearly in it.

2. *Content*.—When we turn to the second and even more important test of a language—the richness or the poorness of the material welded into precision by the forms—we are even more astounded at the wealth heaped up by the old Greek word-coiners. The treasure is simply inexhaustible. In this respect as in regard to its wealth of forms, Greek is infinitely richer than Latin—a fact acknowledged by the Romans themselves. Latin writers had hard work to conceal the poverty of their language. Herodian, in his work on Accentuation, gives the accents of 60,000 Greek words, and this does not nearly represent the whole, as he omits many derived and compound words (Bergk, i. 126).

Especially do we find in Greek in richest fulness a class of words specially helpful to the thinker, viz., *synonyms*, groups of words which, with a general agreement of meaning, yet represent the most varied and delicate shades of that meaning. One example is worth pages of assertion. Let us therefore glance at the Greek synonyms for the verb, "to see, to look." In tabulated form, as arranged by Dr. J. H. H. Schmidt (*op. cit.*), these will not detain us long.

I. Words denoting the perceptive sense of sight, intellectual apprehension (looking dictated from without):—

- (1) *blepein* = single look, revealing the mood.
- (2) *horan* = less definite, more the "konstatirung" of facts, intellectual understanding.
- (3) *leussein* = clear look, as of inspiration or astonishment.
- (4) *derkesthai* = sharp or fiery glance of anger or courage, also bright flashing look; from the same root *dark* come *dorkas* = "the roe or gazelle," so-called from its bright eyes; and *drakon* = dragon (G. Curtius).

II. Words signifying "to look" in the sense of "to spy" (looking dictated by necessity from without):—

- (5) *athrein* = look earnestly, enquire (*an-athrein* = look up).
- (6) *skopiazein* = spy, especially from a distance or height (*skopē* = "look-out place").
- (7) *skopein* = look at with a definite object in view (seize with the eye, take heed, look after, watch).
- (8) *skeptesthai* = look anxiously at, think over, consider in the mind.
- (9) *paptainein* = look to all sides in self-defence, or in order to protect others (connected probably with *ptessein* = "to cover down for fear of" (L. and S.).
- (10) *dokeuein* = to follow narrowly with the eye with no friendly intent (as the hound watches the boar); later, transferred to the mind = to think (L. and S.).

III. Words denoting calm reflection:—

- (11) *Theasthai* = to satisfy the eye by looking, to look as a spectator at a theatre.



- (12) *Theorein* = to look at with an intellectual interest, to examine facts with a view to reaching knowledge, to look at a thing, not as a mere spectator but in order to something higher (hence, the name *theoroi*, applied to ambassadors sent out by the State, not only to witness the games, but to learn from other States (Plato, *Laws*, 951-953), to win light for the mind's eye = instruction).

If we now add to the primary verbs the rich family of compound verbs which may be formed from most of them, we get an almost infinite variety of delicate *nuances*, capable of conveying to the mind of the hearer precisely that impression which the speaker desired to convey, and no other.

**Ex uno disce omnes.**—The wealth of Greek synonyms demands and has obtained volumes by way of illustration.

We would only say now about the synonyms in particular what G. Curtius has said about Greek verbs in general, that almost "every one shews us, so to speak, a separate family, with its own family history, and a quite individual stamp of character. It may be doubted," he adds, "if there is another language which has developed this tendency towards individuality so far as that of the Greeks" (*Gk. Verb.*, p. 7).

Here, then, we meet with a fourth grand feature of the language. To flexibility, precision, wealth of material, we must add that old friend whom we already know so well as an essential factor in the Greek composition—INDIVIDUALITY. If, finally, around all these qualities, exterior and interior, we throw the charm of poetry (which as we know from the place-names and composita, Greek richly possesses) and of euphony (in the musical use of vowels and consonants) we shall be able to form an idea of the union of characteristics in Greek which raised her to the undisputed position of queen of tongues. Never was a language with so marvellous a capacity for adapting itself to the needs of speaker or writer. For every conceivable idea in Philosophy, in Art, in Science, Greek is ready with the right expression; in Greek every soul-thought finds its own appropriate word-body. And thus it came to pass that when a language which should be able to express the deepest thoughts of the soul was required Greek stood ready, and Greek was chosen.

**Greek the Language of the New Testament.**—We must bear in mind that Greek was not the only language which might have been used by the inspired writers. There was the language of the earlier Scriptures, which, in human judgment, might seem to have a prior claim to announce the fulfilment of the promises of the older Dispensation. There was also another *koinē* in existence, and one which to all appearance had an immense advantage over Greek, in that it was the speech of the Roman conqueror, and so could have stamped itself everywhere. But Hebrew, the ancient language of the people of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, was passed over—the New Wine of the New Covenant must be put into new bottles. Latin, the language of force, of Law and its terrors, was passed over, and the *koinē* of its subject-races was chosen—that language in whose depth and reasonableness and sweetness and dignity the Message of God to man might find fitting expression, in so far, at least, as human instrument can be made to reveal the Divine.

And let us note that it was just the *koinē*, the common Greek tongue, that was chosen—not pure Attic. The Greek of the New Testament is Hellenistic Greek, the *koinē* of Alexandria, and it departs yet further from the Attic standard by the profusion of Hebraisms with which it is sprinkled, for Hellenistic Greek was the language of the Jews resident in Alexandria. In this language, for their use, the Septuagint and Greek version of the old Testament had been prepared, and in this language, which was understood also

by the thousands of Jews scattered by the Dispersion throughout the world, the New Testament has come down to us.

The language of the New Testament, then, is not Attic. It is a language that stands apart by itself, built up on a foundation in which the Jew as well as the Gentile has a share. It is Greek, but, as E. Curtius (*Der Weltgang*, p. 70) has well put it, it is Greek which has been "naturalised in Semitic lands, has given up her classic disdain," and so become capable of absorbing the wisdom of the East, and of giving expression to those unique ideas of which she was to be the channel. Hence the Hebraisms, which would be a disfigurement in Attic, have their fitting place in New Testament Greek, nay, are indispensable to it.

Thus, all things worked together towards the fulness of the time—just as the knowledge of the one God was diffused throughout the world through the Jews scattered abroad by the Dispersion; and just as, first, the conquests of Alexander and, then, the extension of the Roman power opened up ways and means by which the most distant regions might be reached, even so did the Greeks contribute their share in a wondrous manner to the development of the new life which Christianity brought into the world.

Now that we have traced this first experiment of the Hellenes from its early beginnings up to its full development and its mission in the great world-plan as the Christ-bearer, we ask, Was it, then, a success?

Yea! the verdict is unanimous; such a success as in language-building the world will never see again—a grand and glorious success.

## APPENDIX

**How the Experiment affects us.**—It may not be amiss if we venture here upon a brief survey of the various ways in which the experiment of these old language-builders still affects ourselves. Greek has three very strong claims upon the regard of all thinking men and women. These may be summarised as follows:—

- (1) *Intellectually*, Greek is worthy of study, not only because
  - (a) It has profoundly influenced the language of every civilised race; nor yet because
  - (b) It is the key to a literature which has moulded, to a greater or less extent, all succeeding Literatures; but because
  - (c) In itself it is a source of the greatest pleasure to all who can take delight in the study of language.

In addition to the qualities with which we are already familiar, there yet remains to be noticed one which is by no means its smallest advantage to the modern student of words—viz., its transparency. Greek is a pure, clear, homogeneous language.

(2) *Practically*, again, for the real practical purposes of life, Greek is worthy of study. There can be no greater mistake than to call Greek a "dead" language. If fruit-bearing be any test of life, then Greek is alive to-day. Did we but realise to what an extent we of the present day use Greek, some among us would be no less astonished than was M. Jourdain by the discovery that all his life he had unwittingly been talking prose.

The wondrous adaptability of Greek to meet the requirements of new ideas



is still characteristic of the language. It is, generally speaking, to Greek that our scientific men turn when they want a word-body wherein to clothe any new thought or new discovery. The necessities of science demand of a word precision, clearness, and the power of expressing much-in-little; and all three requirements are found in Greek. It is true that this borrowing from a foreign quarter does not find favour with all. Thus, we have Mr. Ruskin (*Queen of the Air*, p. 72) to the fore with his wish that "the philosophers would use English instead of Greek words," but the very instances which he brings forward to support his own wish prove the wisdom of the "philosophers," in following resolutely the course which they have chosen. Most people, we think, will admit that—*pace* our great critic—*chlorophyll* is a better word for its purpose than "green-leaf," *protoplasm* both more definite and more elegant than the "first-stuck-together," which he would like to see adopted in its place.

It would be strange indeed if the Mother of the sciences could not find the most appropriate names for her children. Anthropology, Ethnology, and Philology; Botany, Zoology, and Biology; Geography, Geology, Geometry, Anatomy, Physiology, Pathology, with all the other -ologies and -ographies, are words of pure Greek origin, and the terminology of each science is, to a great extent, also Greek. Would that we could say wholly Greek! Latin has given us many forcible and vigorous expressions, but the mingling of the two languages in our scientific nomenclature has led to the formation of not a few hybrids—words which are neither Latin nor Greek—and, therefore, certainly not scientific.

To show the part which Greek plays in modern life and in the newer developments of science, we have only to call to mind some of the popular topics of the day. For instance, we cannot speak of the "*hygienic* condition of working-class dwellings" without unconsciously invoking *Hygieia*, goddess of health, daughter of Asclepios; or Athena *Hygieia*, queen of pure air. We cannot speak intelligently of the new theories of disease-germs without classifying the latter as *micro-*, *desmo-*, *sphæro-*, or *spiro-bacteria* (although here Dr. Koch's *bacillus* would probably clamour for admission amongst his Greek brethren). We cannot use the terminology of the youngest of the sciences, Electricity (itself a Greek word), without, whether like M. Jourdain we mean it or no, talking Greek — dynamo, electrode, anode, kathode, rheometer, rheoscope, telegraph, telephone; these are pure Greek words, and others are being coined as we write.

What, then, is the outcome of all this? Surely that every one who can—every one, especially, who intends to devote himself to scientific pursuits in any shape whatsoever—should acquire a knowledge of Greek.

We are all familiar with the pretty quarrel which has been going on between the advocates of a "classical" and of a "scientific" education. Just imagine these two, mother and daughter, being set forth as rivals! Surely their claims cannot be incompatible. Surely here is a case in which we may say of either—"This ought ye to do, and not leave the other undone."

(3) Lastly, Greek is worthy of study *spiritually*. If the language appeals to us as a most perfect instrument of mind, if it is still an active working factor in everyday life—we must, nevertheless, say that its highest claim upon us moderns is the simple fact that in it have been delivered to us the Oracles of God. Therefore, whilst our first argument urged the study of Greek upon the fortunate "leisur'd few," and our second applies mainly to the professional classes, our third comes with force to all who can by any possibility spare the necessary time from other pursuits.

We shall doubtless here be met by the objection that in our English version

of the New Testament we have a most admirable translation, one which no individual student can improve upon.

Very probably not. We yield to no one in love of the English New Testament, which forms not the least part of the intellectual and literary heritage of English-speaking nations. Doubtless it will be with the words that have formed part of himself from his childhood upwards, and not with their Greek equivalents, on his lips that the most accomplished scholar among us will fall into the last long sleep. Nevertheless, whilst freely admitting all this, any one who thinks without prejudice must see that there are certain respects in which no translation can give a perfect transcript of the original.



### § III.—THE PEOPLE

#### INTRODUCTION

Now that we have familiarised ourselves, so far, with the scenes amidst which the work of experimenting was to be carried on, let us turn our attention to the people, the experimenters themselves, and follow their fortunes in those mountain-homes which they were destined to render more or less famous.

The attempt to do this, however, is beset with difficulty. The very oldest records of Greece, apart from the records in stone and those silent witnesses recently unearthed by Dr. Schliemann, are the Homeric Poems. The most ancient portions of these may possibly reach back to 1000 B.C.; but Homer, even in those oldest lays, represents—not the beginning, but the end, the culmination of an epoch—the fine flower of a civilisation which presupposes centuries of development.

What of all the dark silent ages during which this development was slowly going on? Are we to pass them over as utterly beyond our ken, and content ourselves with the historic period as our starting-point?

Such a course is “safe,” but hardly satisfactory. When a man has achieved greatness in any particular way, we are none of us content to accept either himself or his greatness simply as they stand before us. We desire to know *how* he became great—how he is as he is; what influences have been at work; whether he has been perfected by the sunshine or the storms of life. Nor is this desire dictated by curiosity alone. Each one amongst us has his own life-struggle to face. Instinctively, we want to find the key to that which has enabled our fellow-man to grapple the foe and win the fight. It is precisely so in regard to a great people—in regard, that is, to a great aggregate of great souls. We want to know how, why, and under what conditions they came out victors in the combat with circumstance. Hence, we cannot be satisfied with any history of a people which takes no account of the period of growth, of development.

If this consideration is true of nations in general, how much more pressing does it seem when we come to deal with a nation of experimenters!

“Do not show us results,” we say, “show us in progress the trials which gave the results!”

If we are to do this, it is quite plain that we cannot start with Homer—still less with Mr. Grote’s “Hellenic aggregate.” We must penetrate backwards into that dark abyss of time, when there were as yet neither Hellenes nor Homeric Achæans.

How is the feat to be accomplished?

The Greeks themselves tried to achieve it. Their written records begin about 800 years before our own era, but the “facts” which they chronicle go back to 1500 B.C. As soon as the use of writing became apparent, it was employed in the service of the great ones of the earth. Lists of princes and functionaries were drawn up—*e.g.* genealogical tables of the two royal houses of Sparta, lists of the priestesses of the temple of Hera on Mount Eubœa; and as true records of the period in which they took their rise, and perhaps of some

two or three generations preceding that period, such registers and tables may be trusted.

When, however, we proceed to ask whence those old genealogy-mongers and chroniclers derived their information concerning the centuries before their time, no answer is forthcoming.

When we find, moreover, that among the ancestors of the kings of Sparta there figure a sun-god, Perseus, and a sun-hero, Heracles, that the Argive moon-goddess, Io, is enumerated among the priestesses of Hera, we have found enough to prevent our pinning our faith to the old Grecian logographers.

Early Greek history was, in fact, either "manufactured" or formed by "manipulations" from the great body of tradition found existing amongst the people. It is not, however, to be rejected as wholly valueless. We must distinguish between the two processes. Certain elements in Greek "history," such as the story of the descent of the Spartan kings from Heracles, were palpably "manufactured" for political purposes, and need deceive no one; other elements, such as the tradition of the Doric invasion of Peloponnesus, are merely poetical versions of historic events, the truth of which there is no substantial reason to doubt. In regard to the "manufactured" elements, our course is plain, but when we turn to those which were merely "manipulated," it is not so clear. How much of the Greek saga-lore which commends itself to us by its "probability" is to be received as true? how much rejected as false? what is the grain of truth in a tradition? what the accretions which have gathered round it during the centuries?—these are questions beset, as we have said, with difficulty. The gaps which the ancients filled up with manufactured sagas, we moderns supply by hypotheses, but so little is known of the history of Greece before 500 B.C., and so conflicting are the various theories by which modern research has sought to replace the traditions of antiquity, that, as a recent writer, A. Holm, remarks, it would be easy to make out of these conflicting theories two entirely different histories of Greece.

What, then, are we to do amidst this diversity of opinion? Give up the attempt to follow either side? Nay, for "beginnings" not only "have charms," but are, as we have seen, a necessary basis of investigation. To throw away the whole fabric of Greek saga would be to pour out the child together with his bath. Our Hellenes must certainly have gone through the stages of infancy and childhood, and the only means by which we can reach back to this childhood are those very sagas and traditions which some would have us contemptuously reject. It is better to build our historic house upon the most reasonable hypothesis within our reach than to leave it without foundation because we have no certified "building-stones" of facts.<sup>1</sup>

There are, however, as we have seen, hypotheses and hypotheses. What measuring-line or what test shall we apply to them that the structure which we rear may be as secure as is possible under the circumstances?

"The accuracy of an hypothesis," says G. Curtius, "may be estimated thus: Does it afford a good explanation of the facts under consideration? If this is not achieved, or if the facts are better explained on some other hypothesis, it is to be rejected."

Here, then, we have a simple rule. Such hypothesis, such traditions, only are to be accepted as serve best to explain existing monuments—literary, artistic, architectural—or supply a root from which the state of affairs known to have existed in historic times may reasonably have sprung. With this

<sup>1</sup> "It is not our fault," says Niese, "that whenever we attempt to penetrate into the oldest history, we find more material to clear away than building-stones that can be made use of" (*Ueber den Volksstamm der Gräker*, *Hermes*, xii. p. 420).



measuring-rod in our hands, we may sail safely between the Scylla of scepticism and the Charybdis of the impossible.

## THE GRÆCO-ARYANS

The Greeks supposed themselves to be aborigines; they believed that they were indigenous to the land. This belief is mirrored in their traditions. The Arcadians boasted themselves to be *proselenoi*, "existing-before-the-moon"; they had sprung from Pelasgus himself, son of the black Earth. The Argives, again, claimed descent from Phoroneus, son of the River Inachus and the nymph Melia, the Ash-tree. The Athenians believed that they too had sprung directly from Mother Earth, a belief of which they were not a little proud, and which they expressed by the symbol of the grasshopper.

"Quite recently the old-fashioned refinement of dress still lingered among the elder men of the richer class, who bound back their hair in a knot with golden clasps in the form of grasshoppers."—*Thuc.* I. vi. (Jowett).

Of long wanderings undertaken in the night of time, from an original home which in the beginning their ancestors had shared in common with the ancestors of other nations, they had not the faintest suspicion. That these wanderings actually did take place, however—that the Greeks were originally a branch of the great Aryan family, the family which includes, not only the Romans, Celts, Teutons, Lithuanians, and Slavs, but also the Hindus and Persians—has been proved beyond a doubt by the evidence of languages.<sup>1</sup>

The site of the original home—the cradle whence these great nations emerged as clans or tribes—is not (and perhaps never will be) definitely known. All that we can affirm with tolerable certainty is, that the Græco-Aryans entered their new home in the Balkan Peninsula from the north. The entrance may have been effected in two ways:—

(1) We may imagine with Max Duncker and Victor Hehn that they found their way down one of the long river-valleys into Epeirus on the north-west of Greece; or

(2) With Schrader and Bursian, the geographers, we may make our Græco-Aryans halt on the north-east, at the foot of Mount Olympus, where they leave the Macedonians behind, and penetrate southwards into Thessaly. Both hypotheses are tenable; but we prefer the second, which makes Thessaly the starting-point. In its favour it has two indisputable facts:—

(a) An *ethnological*—out of Thessaly came ultimately all the strong races which left their mark on other parts of Greece; (b) a *geographical*—from the nature of the land, Thessaly is admirably adapted to the stage at which the Aryans are believed to have arrived before the Dispersion—the semi-nomadic stage. The beginnings of agriculture had, indeed, been made—the precious seed-corn travelled with the Aryans into Greece; but for long they would necessarily be dependent on their cattle for the means of support. Thessaly is the one district of Greece which answers to all the wants of a semi-nomadic race.

It has been said that the "careful record of providentially ordered fact" is really more stimulating to the imagination than any fiction; and certainly, if we may bring what we know of the immediate wants of a wandering tribe into

<sup>1</sup> See *Hellas: the Aryan Family*, for an account of the discovery of the relationship between the sister-languages, and the various theories now held as to the original Aryan people, the Old Home, the Dispersion, &c.

connection with the existence, amid the rugged mountains of Greece, of such a land as Thessaly, the conjunction is sufficiently striking. Into this land, then, the Græco-Aryans penetrated, following, as we must suppose, the Vale of Tempè, the course of the Peneius, for the great "liquid roads" of Europe were the guides of the wandering tribes. Leaving their cousins, the Macedonians, at the northern foot of Olympus, the Greek Aryans would enter, from the fertile Pierian plain, the narrow glen which forms the bed of the river between the Wolf's Jaws, the mighty ranges of Olympus and Ossa. Savage cliffs tower almost perpendicularly above the gorge on either side—now "contracted by some giant pressure," approaching so closely as barely to leave room for the current of the river—now opening out on either hand into green glades. The gorge widens; the Peneius encircles little islets in its course; its banks are clothed with noble trees, the denseness of their verdure almost excluding the rays of the sun; the air is melodious with the singing of the birds and fragrant with the perfume of the humble aromatic plants which clothe the rocks. Finally, after a march of some four and a half miles, the wanderers emerge from the Wolf's Jaws to find themselves in the sunny Thessalian Plain.

A motley crew they are—men, women, and children, clad in their rough sheep- and goat-skins and their shapeless coats of felt, bringing with them all of living interest that they possess—their flocks and herds together with their creaking waggon-houses, their scanty store of goods and chattels, and, what they value more, their most precious treasure—the sacred ashes of the dead.<sup>1</sup>

Not a very brilliant picture, you will say, of the ancestors of the great and polished Greek people. No; but a true one, so far as present evidence goes. We have no right to postulate for our Græco-Aryans the possession of a higher degree of material civilisation than that which is displayed before our eyes in the prehistoric lake-dwellings of Switzerland. Whether the inhabitants of the lake-dwellings were Aryans or not, is a question which will probably never be fully answered;<sup>2</sup> but their degree of civilisation corresponds marvellously to that which language demands for the primitive Aryans. Like the lake-dwellers, the Græco-Aryan belonged to the later Stone Age—the period in which metal is just beginning to be worked. They were acquainted with one metal, probably copper; but as they had apparently no tin, we must abstain from picturing our Aryan warriors as clad in flashing bronze like their descendants of the Homeric age.

<sup>1</sup> The custom of disposing of the dead by incineration (or, as we now call it, "cremation") must have arisen, as Jacob Grimm long ago pointed out (*Abh. der Berlin Akad.*, 1849, *Ueber das Verbrennen der Leichen*), amongst a nomadic people, anxious to carry with them the remains of their dead. It prevailed among nearly all the Aryan races, associated with ceremonies which point to a common origin. Probably, however, the practice of inhumation existed side by side with that of burning, the latter being the mode adopted by those whose means and position allowed it. That burning finally prevailed among the Hindus is probably due to the growth of religious ideas—especially of fire as a purifier. As fire transformed the offering of the worshipper, in order that, in another shape, it might ascend to heaven, so in like manner, it disengaged the soul from its material habitation and transported it to its new home. Thus the deity of fire, Agni, was invoked to surround with his light and glow the soul of the departed, and to carry it gently to its forefathers in the abodes of the blessed. These religious ideas, however, are not found among the Greeks; the burning of the dead had its origin with them apparently in affection; for, judging from the "pit-graves" at Mycenæ, the practice seems to have been discontinued when they were settled in their new home. That we find burning revived again in Homer is, doubtless, to be explained on the same ground—the giving up of their homes by the emigrants from the mother country. Urns containing the ashes of the dead are easily transported (*cf. Helbig, Das Homerische Epos aus den Denkmälern erläutert*, 2te Aufl., p. 67).

<sup>2</sup> Helbig considers that the lake-dwellings in the Plain of the Po were the most ancient settlements of the Italian Aryans. See the excellent chapter on the subject in Schrader's *Prehist. Antig.*



That their chief wealth lay, as stated above, in their flocks and herds, is a fact abundantly proved by the allied Aryan tongues, and, indeed, the relics of a purely pastoral stage in their existence are preserved in the language and customs of the Greeks themselves, as we shall presently see.

The domestic animals which accompanied the Aryans into Greece were not only the cow (most valued of all) but the sheep and goat, and also the pig, which was probably the last to be domesticated, since to rear it requires a settled life. How important this animal has become even in prehistoric times is evident from the allusions in the *Odyssey*, where the herds of swine under the care of the worthy thrall, Eumæus, appear as forming no inconsiderable part of the chieftain's wealth.

Neither the sturdy mule nor the patient ass can figure in our present picture, however; for they were not known in prehistoric times, although in Homer the mule is already the beast of burthen and the ass is mentioned once. The lumbering waggons of the tribe must have been drawn by oxen, for the horse, although known, was probably not yet tamed.

The dog was a faithful comrade then as now. So also, in one sense, was the mouse, for it puts in an appearance with every branch of Aryan descent, though its common name (*mush*, "to steal") betokens it faithless from the beginning, and princely times it must have had with our forefathers, for the cat is conspicuous by her absence.<sup>1</sup>

So much for the living creatures that had accompanied our Græco-Aryan in his long and dreary marches through steppe and forest, over the mountain passes and across the streams that lay in his route.

Turning now from the animal to the master, from the tamed to the tamer, we must premise that if we allow ourselves to form our estimate of the Aryans merely from the degree of material culture arrived at by them, we shall make a great mistake. The discovery of the metals may, or may not, be "accidental"; but there is another standard whereby a primitive people can be tried, a standard from which the fortuitous element, the element of "accident," is eliminated, and that standard is—their language.

Judged by this criterion, the primitive Aryan people, the ancestors of the English as of the Greeks, must take very high rank indeed. They had developed a language which at the present day, at the distance of thousands of years, is by the regularity of its construction and the richness of its form, the "very joy of the grammarian's heart." To develop such a language requires, in its own period of the world's history, intellectual power and mental discipline fully as much as does the development in later ages of a literature.

Let us not think, therefore, that because our Greek Aryan comes before us armed with an axe of stone instead of one of iron, that we are face to face with a savage. Far from that! we are dealing with a race of the highest mental ability; therefore, with a race that has made the most of every opportunity that has come in its way. The Aryans have dwelt together for at least one thousand years, and during this period they have not only built up this wondrously-inflected language, but they have made beginnings in various arts which only require the application of better methods to show a like wondrous development.

<sup>1</sup> The cat, of all domestic animals, was the last to appear in Europe (about A.D. 150 in Italy: Hehn), although in Egypt its domestication (and worship as sacred) goes back to high antiquity. Until its arrival the mouse, which, as stated, undoubtedly accompanied and plagued the Aryans, must have revelled in granary and storehouse. What a pest this little creature was in the fields (although here it was kept in check by weasel and marten) is shown by the appellation given to Apollo in Asia Minor and Rhodes—Smintheus—the god who protects the fields from the plague of mice.

By the aid of fire and his stone-axe, the Græco-Aryan contrived to fell the huge trees of the primeval forest, to hollow out of the gigantic trunk his canoe or monoxylon<sup>1</sup> and to obtain timber for the construction of his plough, his waggon, and his hut. The last was probably made of loam or of wicker-work, as often as of timber, circular in shape (like the round tent of the wanderings, which perhaps served as a model), and furnished with a door, though not with a window. The hearth was probably in the middle of the room, and the smoke escaped as best it could by the door or an opening in the roof, for chimney there was none. While the foregoing describes the dwelling of the common man, it is probable that, even in the primeval Aryan period, the chief and principal men of the tribe had more spacious abodes, block houses, provided with an entrance hall in front.

That a very much more primitive dwelling was also used in early times is, however, proved by certain terms which have come down to us in Greek, and which designate a "hole" or subterranean abode. The mode of constructing these habitations has been described for us by Vitruvius as follows:—Over an excavated hill of earth, posts were set up in conical form (tent fashion) and fastened together at the top. These posts were then covered with reeds and brushwood, and finally the greatest weight of earth which the structure would bear was piled upon it. The entrance was made by cutting in a passage from below, or by means of a ladder from above. These artificially-built underground dwellings were used in historic times by several Aryan races, Phrygians and Armenians, and they may be seen at the present day, not only in the districts inhabited by these peoples, but also in the South Russian steppes—that region which, according to the latest theories, formed the halting-place of the European Aryans after the Dispersion. Possibly we shall not be wrong in concluding that this was the first kind of dwelling used by the Greek after he abandoned his waggon-house and nomad life; and its curious form is perpetuated before our eyes to this day in the so-called "bee-hive tombs" of Mycenæ.

One of the Greek names (referred to above) for these dwellings, *pholeoi-fallo*, "hiding-place," shows for what purpose they may have been designed. Safe they certainly were, whether the enemy came in human guise, or as a beast of prey, but dismal to the last degree they must have been. Imagine a prehistoric family sitting in the long winter evenings round their hearth in an underground hole of this kind, dimly lit up by a pinewood torch flaring through the circling smoke, which eddies around vainly seeking an exit, whilst the howling of the wolves overhead makes a cheerful accompaniment to the crackling of the logs. Yet, we take it, our prehistoric prisoners would roast their acorns right merrily, and beguile the weary time with the myths and legends and the songs that had travelled with them from the old home. Better to be thus snugly ensconced in the bosom of Earth than to be crunched between the teeth of the devourer.

Such habitations, although, as we imagine, only resorted to later in necessity by our Greeks, must have been common enough in the earliest times. We can realise the joy with which their inhabitants would welcome the return of summer. No sooner has Mother Earth donned her mantle of green than they too come above ground with the flowers. They are off to the forest; the summer hut of branches and basket-work is soon put together; and good-bye for a time to fear and gloom! The picture is homely; nevertheless, it lies at the root of many an old legend that has floated down to us, and may, therefore, find its place here.

<sup>1</sup> Such craft, hollowed out of a single tree, are mentioned by Arrian as used on the Danube (*de Expe. Alex.*, i. 3). They held as many as thirty men.



As to the garb of our Aryans, it need not surprise us that they preferred a dress of hides. In those days leather formed the best, and indeed the only, panoply against the arrows of the enemy or the tusks of the boar; and, as we know, sheep-skins continued to be worn in the historic period, not only by slaves, but generally amongst such peoples as the Western Ionians and the Arcadians. We say the Aryan sensibly preferred his leathern attire, for he probably had a choice of material, since felt was made, and sewing, together with spinning and weaving in flax and wool, were practised. What degree of proficiency had been attained in these arts, however, it is impossible to say.

Coverings for both head and feet were known, and all sorts of ornaments are supposed to have been in demand, chiefly, as we may imagine, those made of the precious copper for the women, whilst the tusks of the wild boar in grand array would adorn the head-gear of the heroes.

As to the intellectual attainments of the Aryans—they had worked out the conception of the lunar year; they measured time not by the sun but by the moon, *mā* = the measurer, “the golden hand on the dark dial of heaven.” Thus, they naturally reckoned by nights, not by days, a method which still survives in our own “fortnight,” “se’nnight.” In all this the Aryans lag far behind the Babylonians. In the original home, they had probably neither the clear sky nor the expanse of plain that favoured the observations of the Chaldeans. They had, however, given names to some of the stars; and they had developed numeration to 1000, a fact which, irrespective of any other consideration, places a great gulf between them and the savage whose reckoning powers do not carry him beyond his five digits. No word was coined in antiquity, any more than now, until it was actually wanted to express a new idea. Hence, that the Aryans possessed the word shows that they also possessed some object on a grand scale, cattle or warriors as the case may have been, whose numbers were systematically taken. Let us note, also, that only the Greeks, Persians, and Hindus preserved this numeral. The other nations, whose wanderings were, perhaps, longer, and sufferings on the way more severe, probably lost both the idea and the name, for their highest numeral is 100.

The social relations, political institutions, and religious conceptions of the Aryans are all subjects of deep interest; but they will be best treated separately, in future chapters in connection with the Greek national development in matters social, political, and religious. We shall only say here, therefore, that (1) the idea of the Family, as the basis of Society and of the State, was established; that (2) the political organisation was most probably still the Clan or union of families connected by the tie of blood, although there is also the probability that several such clans may have amalgamated and jointly chosen a king, a man of light, to be their leader during the migrations; (3) and finally, that they worshipped the God of the bright heavens, whom they called upon as *Dyāus-pitā*, “Heaven-father.”

Many and most ingenious attempts have been made to fathom the character of this old Aryan race by tracing the root-ideas that lie at the base of the words which they coined. In this way, for instance, many gentle and tender meanings have been assigned to the names expressive of relationship, names which run through all (or well-nigh all) the sister-languages. Thus, the father is the “protector,” the mother the “orderer” or “manager” of the household; the brother is “he who supports” (the sister); the sister “she who dwells with” (the brother); the daughter is the little “milkmaid,” and so on. Such etymologies throw a beautiful radiance over the darkness of prehistoric night; but there is an uncertainty about them which prevents our using them as solid foundation. The names for “mother,” *e.g.*, may simply be elaborations of

the *ma-ma* which comes naturally to the lips of every babe throughout the world.

An indication of Aryan character far surer than can be gained from isolated words lies before us in the structure of the language itself, that language which forms the basis of the noble languages of antiquity, Greek, Latin, Sanscrit. From it, without risk of exaggeration or error, we can deduce at least three grand characteristics: (1) An innate love of order—this is shown by the regularity of construction; (2) an innate sense of reasonableness of “the fitness of things,” proved by the mode of word-building; here “essentials first” seems to have been the motto; (3) an innate sense of harmony and rhythm, welding diverse elements into one beautiful whole.

Love of order, reasonableness, perception of the beautiful, these qualities and the strength which wielded them, we may unhesitatingly ascribe to our ancestors, the primitive Aryans.

### THE PELASGIAN AGE

Through the beautiful Vale of Tempē, then, following the course of the Peneius, as we have supposed, wandered our pioneer tribe into the Great Plain—to be followed, probably at no great interval of time, by yet other tribes. Unopposed we can hardly imagine their settlement to have been; for the Balkan, like the Italian, peninsula, was in all probability already sparsely inhabited—perhaps by Turanian races. If this assumption is correct,<sup>1</sup> it follows that those already in possession would not yield without a struggle. Equally certain is it, that a semi-nomadic people like the Aryan would not be easily deterred from pitching their tents—or, rather, setting up their waggon-houses—in the rich Thessalian Plain. Olympus itself, by its soaring height—its inaccessible mysterious summits lost in the clouds—may have recalled to their minds the sacred mountain of Aryan tradition, and thus served as a sort of “sign” or token that this was to be their resting-place.

However this may have been, at its great foot they encamped, and a “sacred mountain,” we know, at least, it afterwards became to them. Here they planted the worship of the Heaven-Father, Dyâus-pitâ=Zeus pater, as the name of an ancient city, Dion, shows; and here (somewhere in that part of the Great Plain afterwards known as Pelasgiotis) it is surmised that the first Dodona may have been founded—the Dodona of the Pelasgian Zeus whom Achilles invokes in the *Iliad*; the Dodona which was fated to vanish before its more famous *filiale*, the daughter-institution of Epeirus and of history.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On this question, great diversity of opinion prevails. For a résumé of the arguments, see *Hellas*: Dispersion of the Aryans, p. 51.

<sup>2</sup> The existence of this Thessalian Dodona is denied by Unger (*Philologus*, Bd. xx., 1863, p. 577, ff.), followed by Duncker and Busolt. It is, however, affirmed by the Homeric interpreters of antiquity, and among modern writers by O. Müller, Bergk, Welcker, and Bursian.

The chief proof of its existence occurs in the often-quoted passage (*Il.*, ii. 748 ff.) from the “Catalogue of the Ships,” a document generally supposed to have been interpolated in the Second Book of the *Iliad*, *circa* 750–600 B.C. (though probably composed earlier), but nevertheless a sort of Domesday Book in its way and the earliest account we have of the Greeks. Hence it is argued that the *Iliad* knows only the Dodona of Thessaly, the *Odyssey* only that of Epeirus. The matter is not of much consequence, it can never be conclusively proved either one way or the other, and need not detain us here; but we may point out (as an evidence that the old poet of the Ships’ Catalogue knew the locality), the curious fact that the phenomenon which he describes in the verses referred to, *viz.*, the reluctance of the Titaresius to mingle its waters with those of the Peneius, has also been observed by modern travellers (Leake, *Northern Greece*, iv., p. 291; Dodwell, *Class. and Topograph. Tour*, ii. p. 110). It is due to the greater weight of light-coloured “silvery” earth, which the Peneius holds in suspension, and over which the clear Titaresius still “flows on, like unto oil.”



In the grassy, well-watered, hill-girdled Plain of Thessaly, then, the Aryans settled down, and began the process of developing into Greeks. Their flocks and herds supplied them with milk and flesh, wool and skins for clothing, leather for harness and for the inside lining of their canoes. The forests offered in abundance timber for the said canoes and for dwellings; ash for the spear, and yew for the bow of the warrior; fir-wood for torches and fuel; wild fruits for man; acorns for man and beast. The wild bees gave honey for the dainties of great occasions and the preparation of the mead that heightened the joy of the feast. The earth gave clay for the potter; and when invited to do so, yielded an abundant harvest of whatever was entrusted to her care—wheat, barley, or pulse.

We cannot think, however, that the invitation would at first be given pressingly. It was not the rich land of Thessaly that made the grand advances in agriculture—still less in horticulture! Such advances were left to the peoples who saw no alternative between hard manual labour and starvation—to tribes, *e.g.*, such as those that wandered further south into a country like Attica. So long as the Thessalian could obtain what he needed by scratching the ground with his primitive plough, so long would he turn his attention to more congenial pursuits. Nor need we attribute this altogether to laziness, for in other directions the first settlers certainly had their work before them. Portions of the Great Plain as well as the mountain-sides would doubtless be still covered by the dense forests of evergreen oak and fir which formed the primeval vegetation of the land. These forests and the mountain caves were haunted by wolves, bears, and boars, from whose attacks neither man nor beast was safe. Herds of wild cattle roamed over the hills. Fierce these creatures must have been, for the taming of the unwearied mountain-bull figures by the side of other doughty deeds in that catalogue of the great achievements of man rehearsed by Sophocles in the *Antigone* :—

“He masters by his arts the beast whose lair is in the wilds, who roams the hills; he tames the horse of shaggy mane, he puts the yoke upon its neck; he tames the tireless mountain-bull.”

The grassy pastures of Thessaly were admirably adapted for the rearing of horses, and from first to last horse-breeding and bull-hunting were the favourite occupations of the inhabitants of the Great Plain.<sup>1</sup> It is, therefore, as hunters and herdsmen—a little later as horse-tamers—rather than as tillers of the soil, that we must think of these early Greeks.

“Greeks,” however, was not the name by which the numerous clans and tribes of the Plain were known. Even so late as Homer, there is no collective designation for them. The Hellenes themselves in after times were wont to speak of the pre-Hellenic epoch as the Pelasgian, but the Pelasgi were only one tribe out of many. The tribe to which the appellation “Pelasgi” belongs of right seems to have settled (if we may judge from the fact that its name clung to the district) in the north-east of the Plain, on the lower course of the Peneius, by the lakes Nessonis and Bœbeis. The names Argos, “plain,” and Larissa, or (as it is spelt on Thessalian coins) Larisa, “fortress,” are supposed to be indications of Pelasgic settlements. Strabo, the old geographer, enumerates no fewer than four Thessalian Larissas; the most famous of which, Larissa on the Peneius, exists as a flourishing city to this day—a proof of the inexhaustible vitality of certain places.

The Pelasgi, however, were not confined to Thessaly; we trace them in the plain of Argos in Peloponnesus, where they founded another Larissa; in

<sup>1</sup> Thessalian coins bear as a device a horse, or a rider with a spear; later coins have a horse and a bull-tamer.

Arcadia, in Bœotia, and in Attica. Let us, however, bear in mind that the old writers sometimes use the term "Pelagic" when they simply mean "pre-Hellenic." The name "Pelagian" must be held to denote, generally, the first stage of culture in Greece—the ages which witnessed the first advances in agriculture, and the first attempts to defend those settlements.

To return now to the Great Plain, we find dwelling in it, or on its mountain-boundaries, all the strong races (with one exception) that afterwards appear in history. The exception is presented by the Ionians, who are conspicuous by their absence. The only reasonable hypothesis on which this can be explained is, that the Ionians were late-comers, who found the Great Plain already occupied and so passed on at once to the south, where we shall meet with them presently. In the Plain and on its mountains, in addition to the ubiquitous Pelasgi and minor tribes (such as the Perhæbians, Ænians, Hestians, Magnetes, and the half-mythic Lapithæ) dwelt five peoples, who, one and all, worked out experiments worth recording. These were the Minyæ, Achæans, Arnæans (afterwards known as Bœotians), Dorians, and Hellenes. Two of these peoples, the Achæans and the Hellenes, were destined, as we shall see, to give their names to successive stages in the national development. At present, however, they are, so far as we know, in no way distinguished from the sister-tribes around.

In the sunny plains of Thessaly, then, and among its strong young races, grew up the first civilisation: the first attempts at agriculture, at a settled life, at city-building, at self-defence, at navigation; the first beginnings of chivalry; the first experiments in friendly political union (the Amphictyony, or League of Neighbours, which will engage our attention later on); finally the first developments in Religion and its handmaids, Poetry and Music, all associated with the hoary guardian of the land—Olympus.

## THE TRIBES OF THE WEST

We have said that Thessaly brought forth many tribes which made experiments grand and worth recording.

It is a strange fact, however, that a tribe which, apparently, made no experiments and whose very existence has been doubted, is that which has stamped its obscure name on the experiments of all the rest. Talk of the irony of fate! Why should we speak of the experiments of the Greeks, when in reality we know nothing about the Greeks, Græci, or Graikoi, except their harsh-sounding, creaking name, which has had the audacity to over-ride throughout Europe the beautiful name that belongs to, or was chosen by, the race—the name of Hellenes, "Children of Light"?

Unmelodious as is the word "Graikoi," however, its meaning is not at all unpicturesque, if, with Bursian, we may consider it as an honourable title, signifying "the Old Folk." This is a designation evidently synonymous with Pelasgi. How comes it that the Græci acquired the name, and contrived to extend it for all time to all Hellenes?

Bearing in mind that we are journeying in the region of conjectures, the answer would seem to be that the Græci did, after all, make an experiment and a hazardous one. They may have been the first Aryan tribe to push on to the west and cross the great range of the Pindus, the "backbone" of Northern Greece.

Let us follow in the track of these ancient wanderers, shadowy though they be. Probably, following their guide, the Peneius, up to its sources, the start



would be made from the north-west corner of the great Thessalian Plain, near the angle where the western wall of Thessaly joins the northern, enclosing a grassy space whence rise those huge and most extraordinary rocks of the Meteora, springing from the earth like vast, sheer, perpendicular columns to a height of nearly 1000 feet. Entering, then, by the natural gates of Æginium (Stagús), a cleft in the stupendous mountain wall, they would cross Mount Lacmon by the wild Pass of Metzovo (Zygós, "the yoke"), 5063 feet above the sea-level—in all ages one of the most important routes of Northern Greece; that by which Cæsar entered Thessaly before the great battle that made him master of the world. The mountain across which it leads (Lacmon) is also one of the most remarkable in Greece: from it radiate, as from a centre, to north and south, east and west, the mighty ranges of the land; from it flow five great rivers.<sup>1</sup> The Pass itself, even in our day, like that other great Pass of Langada in the south which we lately crossed (p. 69), tries the nerve of the traveller. The winds blow in keen piercing blasts, and so deep are the snows that they sometimes bury the stems of lofty trees.

This region of terror passed, a few days' journeying would bring the wanderers to a spot which might well repay all the difficulties of the undertaking. Before then they would see a smiling landscape, the very "kernel and heart of Epeirus," a smooth stretch of green meadowland, the Hellopia of Hesiod, surrounding a beautiful lake, the Pambôtis (the Nourisher) of ancient times, Joánnina of our day. Very lovely the whole scene is, in the eyes of the modern traveller, with the silvery peaks of Pindus glittering in the distance. And very promising it must have appeared in the eyes of these men of old, for here, it would seem, they pitched their tents. Here, at least, the oldest Pelasgo-Hellenic settlement in Epeirus was founded. Here, then, our shadowy journey, with a people who are nothing but a name, has brought us at last to firm ground. Whether the Græci were, or were not, the adventurous pioneers among the "Pelasgi" who crossed the Pindus and found out Hellopia; whether the Helli (or Selli), the prophets of Zeus, who served the god at Dōdōna, as Homer tells us, with unwashed feet couched upon the ground, whether or not these journeyed with the Græci and founded the new Dōdōna, no mortal man can say. All that we can claim for our hypothesis is, that it serves to explain the origin of the name Græci. If the Græci were the first of the Aryan tribes to enter Epeirus, they would be looked upon as the old people by the tribes that followed, and would be fairly entitled to the renown that came to be attached to the name. For Dōdōna is accessible from the sea-coast, and hence it was, as is supposed, that when the fame of the oracle spread the Græci were the first tribe with whom visitors from Italy and the west would come in contact. Hence it was, again, as we can easily see, that the name Græci eventually came to be applied popularly throughout the west of Europe to the whole of the Hellenic tribes.<sup>2</sup> Hence it is also that, to this day, we English folk are very familiar with the Greeks, and not at all at home with the Hellenes.

<sup>1</sup> North and south from Mount Lacmon runs the Pindus-chain; on the east its arms are the Cambunian mountains and Olympus; on the west the mountains of Epeirus ending in Acroceraunia. From it flows to the north-west through Epeirus and Illyria the Aous; to the north-west through Macedonia, the Haliacmon; to the east, through Thessaly, the Peneius; to the south through Epeirus the Arachthus; and through middle Greece into the Ionian Sea, the king of Hellenic rivers, the noble Achelous.

<sup>2</sup> The term Graikoi is found first in literature in Aristotle (*Meteor.*, i. 14, 22), as the oldest name for the people afterwards called Hellenes, and it is accordingly used by the learned Alexandrian writers as synonymous with Hellenes. . . . From the universal adoption of the name amongst the Romans, however, we must assume that it reached them first, not in a literary way, but through ancient intercourse between the peoples from the mouth of the Greek tribe itself (Bursian, *Geog. von Griechenland*, i. p. 2, note (1)).

So much for the Thessalian hypothesis. As we hinted, however (p. 123), there is also another, which makes the Aryans arrive first at Dōdōna in Epeirus, and thence spread to Thessaly and the east. This hypothesis has for its main support the statement of Aristotle that the most ancient Hellas lay about Dōdōna, and that there dwelt the Selli (or Helli) and the people then called Græci, but afterwards Hellenes. Aristotle's authority is weighty, but as Niese has recently pointed out, in his assertion that the "most ancient" Hellas lay about Dōdōna, Aristotle is opposed by every writer of antiquity with the single exception of Plutarch; and there is nothing to show that the philosopher was in possession of evidence not known to his countrymen. The record known as the Parian marble also places the oldest Hellas with the Græci in Thessaly.

There is, moreover, another curious fact to be considered in this connection, viz., that the ancients did not reckon Epeirus as part of Hellas at all. The Epeirotes were ranked as "barbarians" by the Hellenes generally. Herodotus, indeed, includes them amongst the Hellenic peoples, and calls the Dōdōnæans expressly Hellenes; but this was probably on account of the sanctuary of the national god in their midst. Be this as it may, in the savage nature of the western coasts of Greece, we find that factor to which we have several times alluded (pp. 10, 13), the barrier which kept the Hellenes from becoming barbarised. It was no barrier to be despised. The only good harbours in Western Greece are those offered by the Gulfs of Ambracia and Corinth. The remainder of the coast is rock-bound. Not only to primitive shepherds of the earliest days did it present an obstacle, but to danger-inured soldiers in very much later times. It was off this coast that Cæsar was caught in a storm whilst making his way, disguised as a slave, in an open boat to join his army in Italy and investigate for himself the cause of Mark Antony's delays. Here, amidst the crashing thunder and the lightning-flashes that lit up the yawning waves threatening to engulf on one side, and the pitiless crags that repulsed them on the other, he reassured the terror-stricken pilot with the prophetic "Fear not! thou bearest the fortunes of Cæsar!" So wild and tempestuous was the sea, however, that Cæsar himself was obliged to turn back.

To come back, however, to the old theme. If the Aryans arrived first in Epeirus, the same route would probably be theirs also. Possibly, in thinking of these first Aryan in-wanderers, we should be right in adding to the horrors of physical and of brute nature—for the country was infested with wild beasts—contests with still more formidable human nature. If any aboriginal tribes inhabited the land, they would be then what the dwellers in Epeirus have always been—what they are in our own day—a fierce and wild race.

Speaking generally of the tribes inhabiting the whole western side of Northern Greece, Ozolian Locris, Acarnania, Ætolia, Epeirus, the fact remains that they lagged far behind the rest of Hellas in civilisation. Thucydides speaks of the Acarnanians and Ætolians of his own age—the age of Pericles, of Sophocles, of the building of the Parthenon—as given to acts of piracy; and of the Eurytanes, the chief tribe amongst the Ætolians, he says that they spoke a quite unintelligible language, and (so the report ran) ate raw flesh. In our own day M. Heuzey describes the inhabitants of these forest-clad mountain-lands as faithfully preserving the old characteristics: "The last Klephts (brigands)," he says, "will be found amongst them."

The acquaintance with the landscape of Epeirus thus enables us to understand three points—Firstly: the character of the natural boundaries which acted as barriers between Hellenism and Barbarism, and kept the Hellenes true to their work.

Secondly: how it was that, even so late as the eighteenth century, Gibbon



could write of Albania (Epeirus) as "a country within sight of Italy, less known than the interior of America."

Thirdly: why, as stated above, Epeirus should have remained a *terra incognita* to the rest of Hellas, and why, in spite of the presence of "sacred Dōdōna" in their midst, the Epeirotēs themselves were not admitted into the Hellenic brotherhood. Dōdōna to the Hellenes was but a colony in a barbarous land, and so it remained for ages, protected by its sacred character, a solitary outpost of Hellenic civilisation in the north, as Ambracia (a colony of the Corinthians) was in the south.

We have now put before the reader the two hypotheses held regarding the earliest settlement of the Græco-Aryans, and must leave him to apply for himself the measuring-rule wherewith we provided ourselves at the outset.

We shall not have much occasion to revisit the west. Rugged Epeirus, as well as deep-soiled Thessaly, was a "nurse of men." In historic times no fewer than fourteen independent tribes inhabited the narrow valleys lying between the hill-ranges which traverse the land throughout, running from north-west to south-east. But the sons of Epeirus had no share in the making of Hellas. Shut up in their valleys and debarred from much communication with other lands, the civilising process went on but slowly among them, and when they came to the front at last, Hellas had both been "made" intellectually, and "unmade" politically.

Let us, therefore, turn our backs, with the wiser Aryans, upon barbarism and non-possibility of progress, and retrace our steps to those clans whose mission it was to develop both upwardly towards a higher culture and outwardly in spreading that culture.

## THE TRIBES OF THE EAST

Returning now by the gloomy Pass of Metzovo, emerging by the gate of Æginium, and crossing the Great Plain, we find ourselves once more at the north-eastern corner of Thessaly, where Olympus stands sentinel. Here in the earliest times dwelt two Aryan races, neighbours, but separated by the giant mountain. At its northern foot had settled the Macedonians, or Long Folk; at its southern, the Minyæ, or Little Folk. Between them, on the north-eastern slopes of Olympus, dwelt the Pierian Thracians, or Mountain Folk, of whom we shall learn more presently.

Why the Macedonians should have been called the "Long" Folk, whether the epithet grew out from the length of their stature or not, we cannot say. Certain it is that it proved suitable to them in various ways: they took a very long time, as compared with the Hellenes, to develop politically; they then showed themselves what is often called "long-headed" or "long-sighted" in their policy, *i.e.*, they were astute enough to foment to their own advantage the quarrels among the shorter-sighted Hellenic States; finally, they stretched forth that "long" arm by which they contrived to grasp the whole of Hellas for themselves. Nevertheless, selfish as was the policy of the Macedonians, there came from among them one ordained to be an experimenter on the grandest scale, and for his sake, the sake of what was accomplished by Alexander the Great, we must admit that the Macedonians as well as the Hellenes had their place in the world's work, although their work began when that of the Hellenes had well-nigh ended. Many centuries, however, have to pass before the fruits of the tree which the Hellenes planted are ripe for the dispersion of Alexander.

## THE MINYÆ

Foremost among the earliest of these planters—the earliest experimenters—were the neighbours of the Long Folk, the Minyæ, or Little Folk, to whose presence in the very north of Thessaly, as well as further south, two cities on the borders of Macedonia, Orchomenus, and Minya (called in earlier days Halmon or Salmon) still bore witness in historic times.

Small the Minyæ may have been in numbers or in stature, but small in energy or in mother-wit they certainly were not. The conies, we are told, are but a feeble folk, and yet they are exceeding wise. And the Little Folk of Hellas, despised as they doubtless were by their mightier brethren, yet outstripped them all in the race. As R. O. Müller says: “Of all the Greek peoples, it is the Minyæ who first attract our attention and that by their strength and by a certain greatness (*grandeur*, *Grossartigkeit*) in their political development.” In this opinion we entirely concur; but let us first note, as an instance of the diverse modes of treating the earliest Greek history to which we have already referred (p. 122), that whilst R. O. Müller devotes a whole volume to the Minyæ, Max Duncker honours them by incidental notice only, although he too concedes that they were a “noble race.” As such they may serve as a type of the earliest Greek development, the way in which the colonising of Greece from the Great Plain may have been carried out, and the rise and spread of the sagas.

Bearing in mind, then, that we are still only pursuing our chain of conjectures and taking with us our former measuring-staff, let us follow in the track of the Little Folk, or rather in the wake of their canoes, for the Minyæ were, apparently, the first sailors of Hellas.

In the south-east of Thessaly lies a beautiful gulf, so completely land-locked that, but for a narrow opening to the sea, it would be an inland lake. The gulf is formed on this wise: Down the eastern side of Thessaly, and forming one of its mountain-walls, runs a great mountain-chain, beginning in the north with the conical-peaked Ossa, and ending in the south—so far as the mainland is concerned—with the flatter-topped Pelion. The chain, however, does not really end here; it continues its course southward down the rugged peninsula of Magnesia, acting like a great breakwater between the outer Ægean Sea and that part of it which separates Magnesia from the mainland. Then suddenly halting at Cape Sepias, and turning at right angles to its axis, the Pelion-chain throws out a long projection to the west with a narrow isthmus and broken outline. This projection, serving as a southern boundary and breakwater to the basin enclosed, does not extend completely to the mainland, but leaves the narrow entrance mentioned, by which the “lake” is converted into a “gulf,” and communication with the sea is ensured.

Here, then, in the Pagasæan Gulf (now Gulf of Volo) we have a great natural basin, enclosed on all sides, and protected by two natural breakwaters, from the storms of the open sea—fierce enough at times, witness the destruction of Xerxes’ fleet off the outer side of the great breakwater, at Cape Sepias—and yet provided with an outlet by which the open sea may be gained when desired. Can we imagine any position better fitted to be the cradle of a maritime race?

To find the beginnings of Greek seamanship associated with the Pagasæan Gulf is, indeed, just what we might expect, and from the Pagasæan Gulf it was, according to the tradition, that the first ship was launched—the *Argo*—and the first voyage made—the voyage of the Argonauts. With the object of that mythical voyage, the quest of the Golden Fleece, we have here nothing to



do. All that concerns us now is, the purposefulness of the gulf as an experimental school of seamanship, and the purposeful character of the race that dwelt on its shores as well as on the borders of Macedon—the Minyæ.

The headquarters of the Thessalian Minyæ were at Iolcus, a city which lay below Pelion on the northern shores of the gulf, where it runs up far into the land towards the fertile Dotion Plain. Pelion itself, “quivering with foliage,” is a common centre for the sagas, not only of the Minyæ, but of the Achæans and other people dwelling around. On its summit we find planted again the worship of Zeus. To the Temple of Zeus Akraios (the god of the mountain-tops), on the highest peak of Pelion, the noble youths of Demetrias (the city that succeeded Iolcus) were wont in historic times, to ascend with the priests in solemn procession once a year, at the time of the rising of the dog-star (*i.e.* the beginning of the hottest season), clad in fleecy sheep-skins, fresh and shaggy, emblematic of the blessings of the dew and fertility which they went to beg from the god.

Near the temple was the cave wherein dwelt the wise Cheiron, the centaur of the cunning hand, the skilled surgeon, the instructor of Achilles, the hero of the Achæans, and of Iason, the hero of the Minyæ. In reality, a grotto, the entrance to which is now blocked by a fallen rock, does exist some 30 feet below the highest peak. Hard by the site of the ancient city of Iolcus still flows that mountain-torrent, the Anaurus, by whose banks, once upon a time, when the stream was swollen with the snows of Pelion, sat Hera, queen of Olympus, in the guise of a helpless old woman, to test the good-heartedness of Iason by asking him to help her over. Across the foaming torrent Iason carries his burden, loses his sandal in the stream, and then goes on his way—a glorious youth, wielding two spears, with a leopard-skin thrown around his shoulders, his bright locks not shorn, but rippling adown his back, as Pindar describes him—and appears swiftly and suddenly with dauntless soul in the market-place of sunny Iolcus, to the terror of his wicked uncle, the usurper of his rights, who recognises in the one-sandalled hero the long-predicted avenger, and promptly despatches him in quest of the Golden Fleece, hoping thereby to get rid of Iason and his claims for ever.

Then at Pagasæ, the port-town to Iolcus, the *Argo* is built under the direction of Athena herself, Mistress of Shipbuilding, as of all other arts. The fifty heroes of Hellas embark as oarsmen, nor, as Pindar hath it, would one of these sons of the gods be left behind in “savourless and riskless life”—each in company with his peers would test his strength “even were death the price.” Iason, standing on the stern, makes libation from a golden goblet and calls on Zeus “whose spear is the lightning, and on the rush of waves and winds and nights and paths of the deep, to speed them quickly over, and for days of cheer and friendly fortune of return. And from the clouds a favourable voice of thunder pealed in answer, and there came bright lightning flashes bursting through. Then the heroes took heart in obedience to the heavenly signs; and the seer (even Orpheus of fair renown, the minstrel father of song) bade them strike into the water with their oars, while he spake to them of happy hopes; and in their rapid hands the rowing sped untiringly.”<sup>1</sup>

Then the *Argo* (“the swift”) speeds down the Gulf of Aphetæ (“the launching-place”) in the south, whence she finally sails out into the open sea. She is bound for Colchis, the far-distant shore of the Pontus, that region of horrors, of the Scythians and their skull-cups, that *A-xenos*, “inhospitable sea,” which was destined to be changed by Hellenic energy into a *Eu-xenos*, or “place of welcome.”

<sup>1</sup> From E. Myers’ beautiful rendering of that most beautiful of odes, the Fourth Pythian.

Such in outline is the saga of the launching of what was popularly thought of as the first ship of Hellas on her first voyage.

Every saga, we may suppose, contains some one grain of fact, and the one fact here would seem to be that the Minyæ were the first among the Greek races to depart from the timid coasting round their own shores, and launch out boldly into the open sea. We may be sure that the *Argo* was very far from being the first ship launched from Aphetæ. The Little Folk were by no means ignorant of what lay beyond their own homes. They had only to climb to the top of Pelion and there before their eyes they could study as in a map no small part of the greater world outside. From Pelion they could see not only the vast Thessalian Plain, Lake Bœbe, and the Thessalian mountains, the noble range of Othrys, the sharp peak of Ossa, and the broad flanks of Olympus; but they could see as well the great masses of Parnassus, the Malian Gulf with Mount Cæta, and the long island of Eubœa; and, most inviting of all, they could behold, across their own beautiful gulf and breakwater, the broad open sea, with the island-chain of Sciathus-Peparathus-Icus, and away in the far distance to the north, the Thracian peninsula of Chalcidice with the giant head of Mount Athos.

What wonder that the Little Folk should have been seized with the desire to visit some of these tempting scenes as they lay before them under the sunny blue sky?—that both curiosity and the spirit of adventure should have impelled them on, if not to that mythic voyage associated with their Thessalian home, yet to enterprises requiring quite as much courage in days when every new step had to be taken in the dark?

The Minyæ, apparently, did not long remain quiescent in Thessaly. O. Müller takes as their next point of departure the island of Lemnos, which figures in the Argonautic saga; but we are inclined to follow rather those of the race who went south and founded the city of Orchomenus in the country afterwards called Bœotia.

That the Minyæ of Orchomenus were of the same stock as the Thessalian Minyæ is proved by the identity of their sagas. Athamas is represented both as king of Halos in Thessaly and as a Bœotian prince, and we find the cult of Zeus Laphystius, which is bound up with the story of the Athamantidæ, to which we shall refer later on, both in Thessaly and in Bœotia.

The Bœotian Minyæ are always associated with the inland city of Orchomenus, but recent research would seem to prove that this was not their first settlement in Bœotia. On the eastern side of the Copaic Lake, on the height now called "Gulas," the remains of gigantic Cyclopean walls, evidently those of a prehistoric castle, have been discovered. Such a site, near the Euripus-strait, is eminently suited to a maritime people, and we shall probably not be far wrong if we regard the Gulas-hill as the position from which, according to Strabo, the Minyæ were driven by swamp fever. From the eastern they removed, in very early times, to the north-western shores of the lake, and there, on the triangular face of a steep spur of Acontium they built the strong city of Orchomenus, and, in the plain beneath, the so-called "Treasure-house" of Minyas, which Pausanias declared to be a work no less wonderful than the Pyramids of Egypt. This will engage our attention presently. Meanwhile, let us note that at Orchomenus the Little Folk began to develop that "large" policy referred to, which resulted in Thebes itself becoming subject to them. That Orchomenus was a wealthy and important city is evident from the fact that, in the *Iliad*, it is compared to the hundred-gated Thebes of Egypt. Indirectly, also, we learn that it must have been a great centre, for when Odysseus speaks in the lower world with the shades of



the departed, Agamemnon asks him whether he has heard of his son Orestes, as perchance living at Orchomenus, or at sandy Pylus, or at wide Sparta, *i.e.* the places where men most do congregate.

Part of the large policy of the Little Folk would seem, however, to have been directed towards the conquest of the watery element in another shape—the draining of the Copaic Plain. We have already described the nature of the plain and the annual overflow by the Cēphissus, which converts it into a lake (p. 54). The Minyæ are thought to have contrived to hasten the removal of the floods by the construction of artificial tunnels, which they bored through the soft calcareous rock of the mountains, thus supplementing the deficiencies of the natural katabothra. The shafts of subterranean tunnels are, indeed, actually to be seen to this day; but some authorities believe these to belong to the works begun by Crates, an engineer of Chalcis, employed by Alexander the Great to drain the plain.

Whether the tunnels were constructed by the Little Folk or by Crates, is an hypothesis which must be measured by our former meter. Three facts have to be explained: (1) that several places said to have been inhabited by the Minyæ are now under water;<sup>1</sup> (2) that the whole plain, which in historic times afforded nourishment to some half million of men, is now almost entirely given over “to millions of frogs and fishes”; (3) that the reputation of extraordinary wealth attached in antiquity to Orchomenus is only explainable on the theory of the fertility of the plain, a fertility which is depicted on the old coins of the city by sprouting wheat-ear.

The conclusion would seem to be that in the very earliest times active measures were taken to supplement nature, and that the credit of this, in whatsoever way accomplished, belongs to the Minyæ. For the saga says that the Little Folk were only conquered by the Thebans, when Heracles came to the help of the latter and swamped the greater part of the plain of Orchomenus by stopping up the katabothra—a saga which is evidently to be explained by the fact that the Thebans, when they got the upper hand, neglected the precautions taken by the Minyæ, and that thus the plain gradually sank from good to bad and from bad to worse.

However, leaving this debateable ground of swamps, let us note that the Minyæ of Bœotia still continued their seafaring life. Orchomenus, the port to which was probably Larymnæ, was a member of the Calauræian Amphictyony, or League, which comprised seven maritime cities—Orchomenus, Hermione, Epidaurus, Ægina, Athens, Prasæ, and Nauplia—bound together by the cult of Poseidon. Minyas, the hero-ancestor of the Minyæ, is called a son of Poseidon, god of fresh water as of salt, god also (as we have seen, p. 49) of the earthquake and of the beneficent results attributed to that agency in making outlets for the water-floods. As we might expect, therefore, Poseidon was worshipped around the Copaic Lake (especially at Onchestus, in the south, the seat of an old Amphictyony, where were held in his honour games with contests in horse-racing), and his cult was carried by the Minyæ whithersoever they themselves went. That the Minyæ, in common with the Pelasgi and all the other races of Hellas, worshipped Zeus, we have already seen.

We next trace the indefatigable Little Folk to the Gates of Peloponnesus, where stands sentinel, in solitary majesty, the giant rock Aero-corinthus—one of the grandest objects in Europe, perhaps in the world. What induced the Minyæ to settle here, on the bare and rocky isthmus? Not, primarily, the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. for instance, the interesting account of the prehistoric ruins, now entirely surrounded by water, on a rocky height opposite Copæ, given by Lolling in Baedeker's *Guide to Greece*. This castle may have been the first Orchomenus.

safety of the position, although Acro-corinthus is the strongest place in Greece, next to Nauplia in Argolis, and became, as we know, eventually one of the "Three Fetters" of Greece.<sup>1</sup> The real answer to the question will be found if we climb to the top of the rock, and look at the scene below with the eyes of those first mariners. Spread out beneath them they would see a wide landscape, embracing no fewer than eight countries, those afterwards known as Argolis, Corinthia, Sicyonia, Achaia, and across the sea, Locris, Phocis, Attica, and Boeotia. We may be sure, however, that it was not the expansiveness of the view that struck these shrewd observers most. What they would specially note would be something much nearer them—the fact that at their feet lay two seas, separated only by the breadth of the isthmus,  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles at its narrowest part. To the east is the Saronic Gulf, leading to the Ægean, the Hellespont, and the Pontus; to the west the Corinthian Gulf, leading to the Ionian and Sicilian Seas. By-and-by, moreover, when they became familiar with the position, they would find out that the isthmus was the connecting link between the Peloponnesus and Northern Greece. Thus Acro-corinthus rises, the central point between the "watery ways" of east and west and the land-way from north to south, a position unrivalled in the olden time for purposes of trade and navigation as well as for strength.

To assume that the Little Folk grasped all the prospective advantages of the spot, and saw in their mind's eye the future commercial greatness of Corinth, would be to assume a great deal too much. What there is little doubt they did see, however, is the convenience of the natural harbours on either side of the isthmus at the spots where, later, the two port-towns of Corinth sprang up, Lechæum on the Corinthian, and Cenchreæ on the Saronic Gulf, towns both of which took their names from so-called sons of Poseidon = hardy seamen.

Here, then, the Minyæ settled and founded their city, Ephyra, the "Watch-tower," probably on the same site as the later Corinth, the tableland at the northern foot of the colossal rock whose broad summit, with its ample space and wealth of water-springs, served not only as a watch-tower, but as a place of refuge for the inhabitants of the lower town in times of trouble, and as a sanctuary for the god of their race, Poseidon. The new settlement was far enough from the coast to be safe from the attacks of the pirates, who, as Thucydides tells us, infested the coast of Greece, but near enough to the isthmus to profit by all that it offered.

The Minyæ, however, were not long left in undisturbed possession of the watch-tower, for another people, as keen-sighted as themselves, the Phœnicians, who seem to have had stations all along the coast of Peloponnesus from the island of Cythera eastwards, had an eye to the capabilities of the isthmus as headquarters for their purple-fishery and for trading generally. The newcomers, either by dint of force or, more probably, by strategy, seem to have gradually acquired the upper hand, for they not only shared with the Minyæ the settlement at the foot of Acro-corinthus, but actually ousted the worship of the native sea-god from the sanctuary on the citadel, and introduced in its stead that of their own patron deities, the Sun-god, Baal, and the goddess of Navigation, Astarte, who under the names of the Greek Helios and Aphrodite, continued to be worshipped in Corinth down to the latest times.<sup>2</sup> As for Poseidon, his worship was transferred to the isthmus; but even here it was

<sup>1</sup> The other two were Demetrias, which took the place of the old Iolcus in Thessaly, and Chalcis on Eubœa.

<sup>2</sup> "This is evidently the basis of facts underlying the Corinthian saga of the contest between Poseidon and Helios for the possession of Corinth" (Paus., ii. 1, 6, cf. Bursian, ii. p. 11).



associated with that of the Phœnician Melkarth, who, under the name of Melicertes-Palæmon, is woven into the sagas of the Minyæ and their royal house.<sup>1</sup>

Another eastern people (of Aryan, not Semitic descent) the Lycians, also appear upon the scene, allured by the advantages offered by the isthmus. They, too, bring their Sun-god with them; he is assigned a temple outside the city and figures in Greek sagas, no longer as a god, but—as the hero Bellerophon.

Finally, we find in possession of the city Ionians. This is not surprising, for the Ionian race were seafarers like the Minyæ, and their settlements bordered closely on both sides of the isthmus. To them may be due the change of name from Ephyra to Corinth, “the high-city,” when the watch-tower proper, the great rock, naturally became Acro-corinthus or Acro-polis, citadel of the high-city.

If we bear in mind the variety of races that intermingle thus around the great rock—Minyæ, Phœnicians, Lycians, Ionians, and the fifth race that appears later, the Dorian—it will explain much in the after history not only of the city, but of the Greek religion.

The sagas of Corinth also bear the imprint of this commingling of races. In the story of Sisyphus, the too-wise, the prince too-clever-by-half, who thought to outwit death himself,<sup>2</sup> we have a picture which exhibits the features of the keen Semitic traders, the founders of the purple industry of Ephyra, as well as those of the old Æolian sea-kings. The myth of Bellerophon, again, the bold sun-hero, who on his winged horse, grapples with the terrible Chimæra, is probably foreign, Lycian, in its origin;<sup>3</sup> but the form in which the story has come down to us is as undoubtedly native and Greek. The details added—by which Pegasus is born at the springs of ocean, produces a spring, Hippocrene on Mount Helicon, by the stamp of its hoof, and is captured near another spring, Peirene, on Acro-corinthus, mark it out as the Steed of the Muses—the legend that it was Athena, Wisdom, who gave the bridle, whereby the winged creature, Genius, might be tamed—the final catastrophe, in which Pegasus, which has been the willing servant of Bellerophon so long as he employed it in warring against the powers of darkness and disorder, deserts him, when, impelled by his own pride and presumption, he seeks to soar to Olympus and would “fain enter into the heavenly habitations and mix among the company of Zeus.”—All such details are purely Greek. The Hellenes deepened and beautified everything that they touched.

The Ionian influence (which we may perhaps see also in the Bellerophon-myth in the intervention of Athena) is distinctively traceable in the legend which says that the founder of the Isthmian games in honour of Poseidon—a national god of the Ionians, no less than of the Minyæ—was Theseus of Athens, who had previously cleared the Isthmus of the robbers that haunted it, and thus rendered the connecting link between Northern and Southern Greece safe for travellers.

<sup>1</sup> For the story of Ino Leucothea and Melicertes-Palæmon, see *Hellas*, p. 221.

<sup>2</sup> For the story of Sisyphus, see *Hellas*, p. 285.

<sup>3</sup> Some writers consider Bellerophon as entirely a Greek myth, dismissing the Lycian theory. In either case, the myth is Aryan in its origin. Pott (*Z. für vergl. Spr.* 4, 416) compares Bellerophon to *Vritrahari*, “the dragon-slayer” (Indra) of Hindu mythology. Max Müller, on the other hand, derives the name *belleros* from *varvara*, *vellus*, “the shaggy ram,” symbol of the dark cloud (*Chips*, ii. 172).

The Lycian framework, however, must be admitted if we accept Welcker’s dictum that the monsters—i.e. the non-naturally formed creatures of Greek mythology, such as the Chimæra, Minotaur, Sphinx—are all of non-Hellenic origin (*cf.* Welcker, *Gr. Götterlehre*, i. p. 67).

Finally, to come back to our Minyæ—in addition to the Athamas saga, the story of Ino Leucothea—we may be sure that Corinth plays a part in the saga of the Argonauts. Here the national hero, Iason, comes with his consort, Medea, who has followed him from Colchis; here he deserts her to whom he owes all; here Medea becomes that wondrous personification of wounded love, jealousy, and revenge delineated by Euripides; here on the isthmus, Iason appropriately meets his end by the falling-in upon him, as he rests beneath its shadow, of—the *Argo*.

We next trace the Minyæ in Epidaurus, and in several places along the coast of Laconia to Tænarum (now Cape Matapan), the most southerly point of Greece and of Europe. Here there existed from the very earliest times an oracle and famous sanctuary of Poseidon, with rights of asylum; and if we think, with E. Curtius, that this became the national sanctuary of the Minyæ, Achæans, and other races subjugated later by the Dorians, it adds new point to the story of the slaying of the Helots precisely in it, and the statement of Thucydides concerning the public opinion of Hellas as to the “judgment” sent upon the Spartans in the earthquake and the fall of the peak of Taygetus (see *ante*, pp. 50, 63).

Let us note here in passing that the rugged peninsula of Taygetus, of which Tænarum forms the southern point, although it does not figure much in politics, is yet rich in the oldest religious associations. Not only is there the sanctuary of Poseidon at Tænarum, with its supposed entrance to the Lower World, and its oracle where the spirits of the dead were consulted, but, on rounding the coast, we meet with another oracle not without its influence on early history. This was the dream-oracle of Ino at Thalamæ, a retired lowly spot some little way from the coast. Here, again, we have most probably Minyan influence, for Ino (worshipped at Thalamæ as Pasiphaë) figures in the sagas of the Minyan royal house as the wife of Athamas. Leaping into the sea with her child, to escape from her mad husband, she was transformed into a goddess, Leucothea, and her son into that divinity, half-Phœnician, half-Greek, Melicertes-Palæmon, who, as we saw, was worshipped on the isthmus. The cult of Ino was widespread along the Mediterranean, and her oracle was not despised by the Dorian Spartans themselves, and their kings slept in the Temple to receive revelations. Again, at Pephnus, on the coast (probably the port to Thalamæ) there projects a rocky island protecting the harbour. This was regarded as the birthplace of the Dioscuri, the patron-deities of the land. The island, although in Laconian territory, lies on the eastern side of the Messenian Gulf, and hence, the Dioscuri, born on neutral territory, were the gods of both peoples. On the rock, in the time of Pausanias, stood their statues on a pedestal, washed by the waves.

We have now followed the Little Folk in their wanderings so far as they may be traced in the earliest times, and to complete the picture, may state here (although we anticipate the course of the narrative) that when ejected from their homes in the Great Plain by the event known as the Thessalian Invasion, they took refuge first in Lemnos and Attica, according to some accounts, or, according to others, went direct to Peloponnesus, where they penetrated into Southern Elis, and conquered part of the domains over which old Nestor, the honey-tongued King of Pylus, had ruled, a district known in historic times as Triphylia, “land of the Three Tribes.”<sup>1</sup>

Bursian conjectures that the Minyæ penetrated even farther north, to the borders of Achaia. The evidence for this is to be found in place-names. The fact that we find both in the north-east and the south-west of Greece mountain

<sup>1</sup> The three tribes: Minyæ, Caucones, and Paroreatæ.



names like Olympus and Ossa, river names like Peneius and Enipeus, city names like Salmone and Ephyra, appears to show that such names in the south were echoes of the old home in the north, clung to by the wanderers, carried with them in all their migrations, and finally given a new substantiality in distant regions. If this be the case, these old prehistoric colonists, separated from us by thousands of years, would seem after all to have been amazingly like ourselves.

We have now only to follow the Minyæ to the islands: we find them in Lemnos; in Eubœa, where they are said to have founded Eretria, long the rival of Chalcis; we trace them, possibly in Sicinus, Andros, and Seriphus, and probably in Melos. Thêra (Santorin) is especially connected with them; this island figures, as we have seen (p. 46) in the Argonautic saga, and from it went forth the colony that made the first Hellenic settlement in Africa, Cyrene, the founder of which, Battus, and the later kings of Cyrene, traced their descent to the royal house of Orchomenus.

Making all reserve for the political purposes which may have inspired such traditions as the one just quoted, we may yet allow from the foregoing sketch that the Minyæ are entitled to the credit of having founded a chain of colonies or settlements round the coast of Greece; in Thessaly, Bœotia, Corinth, Epidaurus, Tænarum, Triphylia, they left their mark in place-names, cults, and sagas.

If we ask how it happened that a race of such energy passed so completely from the memory of their descendants that their name even was hardly known to later times, and their colonies were regarded as settlements of the "Argonauts," we can only say that the Minyæ shared the fate of another race which, but for Homer, would have been perhaps, still less known—the Achæans. Both succumbed to a movement originating in a stronger force, which, as we shall presently see, forms the turning-point in this early period, the Thessalian invasion.

Meanwhile, do not let us imagine that our journey with the Little Folk has been fruitless. On the contrary, although we have been travelling mainly in the dark, although we cannot dignify our sketch by the name of "history," yet on at least three points of interest, some rays of light have fallen:—

(1) We understand how, if the Aryans first settled in Thessaly, their dispersion over the whole of Greece was gradually accomplished. In this respect the Minyæ may stand as a type of the whole.

(2) We have a little insight into the manner in which another process may have been carried on—the migration, not only (a) of tribes, but of their religion<sup>1</sup>—witness the cult of Poseidon, which we find accompanying the Minyæ everywhere, to Bœotia, to the isthmus, to Triphylia, to Cyrene in Africa; (b) of their national sagas, witness the story of Ino; (c) of their home-names, witness Olympus, Peneius, meeting us in opposite quarters of Greece.

(3) Lastly, we have seen the Greek in contact with the foreign element on the isthmus, and can form some conclusion from the Bellerophon-myth as to the manner in which the Greeks dealt with, or experimented upon, what they "borrowed" from the East.

<sup>1</sup> In regard to the above remark on prehistoric colonisation, we find that O. Gruppe takes the same view: "In the Historic period," he says, "religions spread through the founding of colonies, through the conclusion of political and (what were usually bound up with these) religious confederations. . . . We need only lengthen out the picture of historical times into the prehistoric period, in order to understand the circumstances out of which the later distribution of the Greek religions grew" (*Die Griechischen Culten und Mythen in ihren Beziehungen zu den orientalischen Religionen*, i. p. 150. ff.).

## ACHÆANS AND HELLENES

In the south-east of Thessaly, in the mountain province of Phthiotis, which extends to the Pagasean Gulf on the east, and includes Othrys and its spurs in the south, we find again tribes who are only shadows to us, but whose names were destined to preponderate (like that of the Græci) over those of all the rest. For here, in the earlier times, dwelt the clans that Achilles leads to Troy—the Myrmidons, the Hellenes, and the Achæans. Leaving on one side the Myrmidons, or Ant-folk, as a mythic reminiscence of the connection between the sagas of Thessaly and of the island of Ægina—we note that the seats of the two other clans were Phthia and Hellas, “the abode of fair women,” names to be understood probably as denoting districts rather than cities. In later times the name of the Phthiotic Achæans passed over to all the inhabitants of that part of Thessaly, the name of Hellenes to all the tribes of the land collectively.

Here, then, in this little corner of Thessaly, we have apparently the germs of the Hellenic nationality, and we have to ask, as in the case of the Græci, how it came to pass that the name of the Hellenes acquired so widespread a significance. There are three answers to the question:—

(1) A religious answer:—The name may have been associated with that of the Helli (or Selli), different forms probably of the same name, the prophets and priests of Zeus at Dodona. The ruling family of the Thessalian Hellas is represented in the sagas as devoted to the worship of Zeus. The grandfather of Achilles is that king of Ægina and son of Zeus, the pious Æacus, who gains for all the Hellenes the blessing of rain from Zeus on the mountains known in historic times as Panhellenium—the heights sacred to the god of all the Hellenes. The father of Achilles is Peleus, the favourite of the gods, chosen to wed the Nereid Thetis, whom Zeus himself would have espoused but for that decree of the fates which Prometheus reveals.<sup>1</sup> Achilles himself, in the *Iliad*, keeps in a coffer a special goblet, fair-wrought, out of which no man has drunk; and wherewith he makes libation to no god, save to Father Zeus only. The family of the Æacidae may, therefore, have been Helli, or in some way connected in the oldest times with the worship of Zeus, the national god of Hellas.

(2) A traditional answer:—The tradition of the flood of Deucalion was localised in Thessaly together with the oldest Hellas, and from Hellen, the son of Deucalion, the only man preserved alive, all genuine Hellenes traced their descent.

(3) An historical answer:—Thucydides tells us that this Hellen and his sons became mighty in Phthiotis, and were invited by other tribes to help them; hence their name gradually spread and preponderated.

These three answers we shall have to test presently by our hypothesis-meter.

Meanwhile let us leave the question for a time, and pass on to note that in this little corner of Thessaly we have the germs, not only of the Hellenic name, but of the national epic, for the Thessalian Achaia is the home of the national hero, ACHILLES. Into the physical basis of the saga of Achilles (if it had one) we cannot enter here. In the old Aryan home, the hero may have been a personification of the sun, as the upholders of the solar-myth theory, which is to explain all and everything, would have us believe; in the earliest days of the Græco-Aryans, Pelides, “fleet of foot,” may equally have been an embodiment of

<sup>1</sup> See under “Prometheus,” in *Hellas*, p. 95.



the river of his native land—Spercheius, “the rapid, the hasty”—as Forchhammer suggests. What concerns us now to note is that, when we meet with Achilles, he is neither sun nor river, but a human being, the national hero of the Achæans—*i.e.* of the Excellent Folk, the Noble—with a personality quite as definite as that of any of his modern interpreters; and, further, that the sagas of his parentage, birth, and education, are all localised—have taken definite shape and being—in Thessaly, and in that part of Thessaly with which we are already acquainted as the home of the oldest sagas—the landscape round the Pagasæan Gulf.

His goddess-mother, silver-footed Thetis, the Nereid, dwelt beneath the stormy waters of the Ægean Sea off Cape Sepias and the dreaded Magnesian coast, that shoreless, harbourless coast, which, Herodotus tells us, was supposed to belong to Thetis and her sister Nereids, and along which they kept watch to preserve all good and true sailors from the fate that later befell the invader.

On the summit, moreover, of broad-topped Pelion, “quivering with foliage,” was celebrated the wedding of Pelias and Thetis, to which the gods themselves came down, bringing with them as wedding gifts the famous horses and armour of Achilles. To do honour to the event, the fifty daughters of old Nereus whirled in the circling dance on the white sands of the Pagasæan Gulf; the company of the Centaurs, each with his fir-tree staff and wreath of tender green, made their way through the neighbouring forests; and the Muses, in their golden sandals, came over the hills from Pieria. There, on the top of Pelion, they sang to the sound of cithara and lute, and predicted the birth of Achilles and the fate of Troy; and all was merriment and gladness, until that uninvited guest, Eris, “Discord,” suddenly appeared, and threw into the midst of the assembled goddesses the fatal apple, bearing the inscription, “To the most beautiful”—a catastrophe which led, as we all know, to the Judgment of Paris, the Abduction of Helen, and the Siege of Troy.

Pelion also, according to the oldest sagas, is the scene of the youth of Achilles, who is instructed, like Iason, by Cheiron, the wise old Centaur.

Here, then, we have the germs of the story out of which grew the *Achilleid*, or Lay of Achilles, which, it is thought, was carried in the later migrations of the Achæans to Asia Minor and there developed and interwoven by Ionian imagination into that wonderful web which we call the *Iliad*.

The story of the wedding of Thetis, indeed, is not explicitly told in the *Iliad*, but neither does Homer explain how his hero acquired the epithet “fleet of foot.” A knowledge of the old sagas on the part of his hearers is taken for granted by the poet. His part, the part of genius, is not to rehearse the whole, but to select only what is necessary for his purpose.<sup>1</sup> That the *Iliad* was Thessalian in its origin, however, cannot we think be doubted.

How much of the story (as we now have it) of the hero to whom it was granted to choose between a long and ignoble existence and “a short life of glory and honour”—and who, the type of all true Hellenes, chose the latter—how much or how little of all this migrated from the mother-country with the wanderers, it is hard to tell. Readers who are curious as to the “primary” *Iliad*, should consult the lucid chapter on the Homeric question in Professor Jebb’s *Introduction to Homer*.

Finally, let us note that another tribe, bearing the same name, “Achæan,”

<sup>1</sup> The events which led to the Trojan War—the throwing of the Apple of Discord, Judgment of Paris, &c.—were given in the *Cypria*, a poem belonging to the so-called Epic Cycle, and written or compiled probably about 776 B.C. The *Cypria* carries the story down to the point at which the *Iliad* opens.

wandered south into Peloponnesus, and established itself on the banks of the Eurotas in Laconia and of the Machus in Argos. No connection, however, exists between the sagas of the Thessalian and Peloponnesian Achæans, although both tribes had probably the same origin.

### CADMEIANS (THEBANS)

Leaving now for a time Thessaly, "nurse of men," let us turn our attention once more to Bœotia, and glance for a moment at the Southern Plain, the dwellers in which paid tribute, as we have seen, to the Minyæ at Orchomenus.

Bœotia is divided naturally by a low range of hills into two plains or basins, each of which has its lake and its river—the northern, Lake Copais and the Cēphissus; the southern, Lake Hylica and the Asopus. About the middle of the separating chains, on a low projecting height, lay a city destined to become very famous in Greek annals, Thebes, "the hilly," the rival and subsequent conqueror of Orchomenus.

On observing how completely distinct the two great valleys are, says Colonel Leake, each of them being surrounded by mountains, except at the low ridge of Onchestus, one is not surprised that Bœotia should have been for a long time divided into two great political leagues, of which Thebes and Orchomenus were deservedly the chief places.

In antiquity Thebes, or rather its citadel, the Cadmeia, was supposed to have been founded by Cadmus, who was regarded as a Phœnician and the introducer into Greece of the earliest elements of culture, especially of the alphabet. This ancient theory of a Phœnician settlement in the heart of Bœotia has, in modern times, neither been proved nor disproved. It is open to any one to regard the name "Cadmus" as of Semitic origin (Kedem, "the East"), and to think with Busolt that in the legend of Cadmus and Harmonia, we have only a free version of the Phœnician myth of the wandering Sun-god Melkarth, who seeks the Moon-goddess Astarte, and finds her in the Far West, where he weds her. Or we may, with Max Duncker, accept the legend as the traditional account of a real historic occurrence, viz., the existence of a Phœnician colony at Thebes.

Our hypothesis-meter does not give much assistance here. We may say, on the one hand, that an inland spot is not such a site as was usually chosen by a maritime people like the Phœnicians. They preferred to plant their colonies along the coasts; but then, on the other hand, it is evident that Thebes from its position—midway between two seas, the Eubœan Channel and Corinthian Gulf, and commanding the road to the great city of Orchomenus—offered advantages not to be disregarded by a race of traders.

Again, if we turn to the sagas—the earliest history—we find that, while the Cadmeia, or upper city, is built by Cadmus, a Phœnician, the walls of the lower city, seven-gated Thebes, are the work of Amphion and Zethus. Amphion, we are told, is the husband of ill-fated Niobe, daughter of Tantalus, king of Lydia. At the wedding of Amphion and Niobe it is that the Lydian mode or harmony is first introduced into Greece. Here we have a saga pointing to Asia Minor and to the Aryan, not the Semitic East. Others again look upon Cadmus as nothing else than the native representative of the oldest Theban state, and interpret his name according to Greek etymology, as the Prince, the Orderer (allied to Kosmos, "the beautifully arranged universe.")

We have not much light on the subject from Homer. He speaks, indeed,



of Amphion and Zethus as the founders of seven-gated Thebes; but he also speaks of the Cadmeians, though not of Cadmus.

All that we can say with certainty, therefore, is that round the Cadmeia there grew up very early a cycle of sagas, pointing to a connection not only between Thebes and Phœnicia (Cadmus and Europa) and Thebes and Lydia (Niobe), but also between Thebes and Argos in Peloponnesus (the War of the Seven against Thebes).

Turning now to the site of the city itself, we can find no other reason than that of its central position, which could have commended it to those old builders. Speaking of Thebes, Colonel Mure says, "There is, in fact, no Greek city whose site and aspect are so little in unison with the associations either of poetical or historical celebrity that attach to them. Thebes has no majestic Acropolis, no brilliant sea-view, like Athens, Corinth, Argos; no stern bulwark of rugged cliffs and yawning precipices, like Mycenæ; no joyous river, no snow-capped mountain that she can call her own, no festive brilliancy of surrounding plain like Sparta." All that Thebes could boast of was her wealth of water—her two famous springs, Dirce on the west, Ismenus on the east—and the verdure of her gardens, which made the city a delightful resort in summer. But in winter, the cold winds sweeping down from the hills, the snowstorms, the floods, and the scanty supply of fuel, rendered Thebes, as Dicæarchus tells us, anything but a delightful resort in historic times; and the same evils were doubtless experienced even more keenly in early days. The exposed position of their city may, indeed, have had something to do with the cruel and unforgiving temper of the Thebans of Greek history; probably it had much to do with the gloomy character of the Theban saga-cycle. Gloomy sagas indeed these are—sagas of an Œdipus and the "doom" hanging over his house, of a hatred between brothers inextinguishable even in death—gloomy, yet lit up by a sunshine more glorious far than any that breaks through Bœotian mists, for to the sagas of Thebes belongs the brightest ray of Hellas: the story of Antigone, her generous devotion and her martyr death. Granted that the story, as it has come down to us, is told by Attic genius, yet the main elements of the character of Antigone, the picture of the Theban Cordelia leading the Theban King Lear, must have been ready to the hand of Sophocles.

No place in Greece was richer in mythic associations than was seven-gated Thebes. On the Cadmeia itself, one spot would be shown to the stranger as that whereon the house of Cadmus had stood, with the ruins of the chamber of Semele struck by the lightnings of Zeus; another, as that from which Teiresias, the famous seer, had made his observations on the omens and the flight of birds; in the lower city, he would see the spot where had flamed the funeral pyre of the luckless children of Niobe.

Beyond the walls many places full of traditional interest would meet him: the ruins of the house wherein Heracles was born, with a monument to the children slain in his madness; the spot whereon Cadmus had sown the dragon's teeth from which sprang the ancestors of the future nobles of Thebes; and the place where, according to Theban legend, Amphiaræus, the seer, was swallowed up by the earth. He would see, further, Œdipothia, the stream wherein Œdipus had cleansed his hands from the blood of Laius, his unknown father; the grave of Amphion and Zethus; that of the noble, self-sacrificing Menœceus, son of Creon; and near to it the place where the two sons of Œdipus had fallen in single combat, and the sacred ground across which Antigone (according to the Theban version of the story), with her feeble strength had dragged the body of Polyneices to the pyre of Eteocles, and by this act of sisterly

devotion incurred her own tragic fate. Finally, not far off, between the city and the Copaic Lake would be shown the hill Sphingium, the lurking-place of the sphinx mastered by Œdipus. All these mythic reminiscences, and many others belonging to the Historical period, clustered around seven-gated Thebes.

Just as Iolcus and Orchomenus may be looked upon as the first seats of Hellenic navigation and State policy, so may it be said of Thebes that she seems to have been one of the first centres of culture. "Here," as Keller truly says, "the first blossoms of the culture of the Heroic age—Music and Poetry—must have been very early put forth, for the sagas of Cadmus and Harmonia, of Amphion and Zethus, of Dionysus and Semele, of Actæon and Pentheus, &c., betray the existence of an old school of lyric song, and were always amongst the most popular sagas of Greece. In the legend of the building of the walls of Thebes—the story that the dead stones received life from the sweet strains of Amphion's lute, and themselves moved into position of their own accord—we have, perhaps, a reminiscence of the early striving of Thebes after unity and a higher culture; a striving, the memory of which may be preserved also in the name of the consort of the old mythic king—large-eyed Harmonia."

### THE THRACIANS

In addition to the Pelasgi, Minyæ, Cadmeians, Ionians, &c., who had settled in Bœotia, another so-called "tribe" must engage our attention for a few moments on account of the importance of the experiments attributed to it—a tribe of "Thracians" that had settled on the slopes of Helicon.

No less than three theories are held regarding this enigmatical race.

(1) That they really belonged to the Thracian people, who in early times occupied the vast stretch of country lying between the River Strymon and the Black Sea.

(2) That they were a tribe not of Thracian, but of Greek descent.

(3) That they were not a "tribe" at all, but merely a "guild of singers."

According to the first hypothesis, these flesh and blood Thracians—these rough mountain-folk—are supposed to have belonged originally to a branch of the race dwelling, as we have seen (p. 133) at Pieria on the north-east slopes of Olympus and the very borders of Greece. When expelled by the Macedonians (who later occupied Pieria as well as Emathia) some members of the tribe crossed the Strymon and settled on the slopes of Pangæus; others wandered into Greece, where they ensconced themselves both on the western and eastern sides of Helicon. In Phocis, their chief city seems to have been Daulis; in Bœotia, Thespiæ. Further south, they settled in the Plain of Eleusis in Attica. This conception of the presence of the Thracians in Greece as an historical fact is held by the old writers. Thucydides says expressly that Thracians dwelt at Daulis in Phocis.

The great importance of these Græco-Thracians, however, lies—not in themselves, for they are only shadows like the Græci—but in the IDEAS which they brought with them, ideas destined to bear marvellous fruit on Hellenic soil, the ideas wrapped up in the cult of the Muses (which they planted at Thespiæ, where it continued to flourish to the latest times), and that of their dual Sun-god, whose stern wintry-side became the god of war, Ares, "Mars," whilst his genial summer-side developed into Dionysus, "Bacchus," the god not only of wine, but of fertility, of the overflowing bountifulness of nature. With



the Pierian cult of the Muses, moreover, the old writers uniformly associated the names of all the first bards and singers of Greece—Orpheus, Musæus, Philammon, Thamyris, Eumolpus.

The Thracians of historic times, were, as we know, compared to the Hellenes—barbarians, distinguished by nothing but their drunkenness. To find, therefore, that Hellas owed to them the civilising, refining cult of the Muses is not a little astonishing—so astonishing that writers like Max Duncker flatly refuse to accept the hypothesis.

It will not do, however, to reject the historical basis of the tradition merely because the Thracians of later times were barbarians. As Helbig has recently pointed out in an elaborate examination of the question, the Thracians of the Homeric age are represented consistently everywhere as being on a level in culture with the Achæans, and we cannot imagine that the Homeric bards would venture on any false description of a people whom many of their hearers must have known by intercourse. In dress, armour, mode of fighting from chariots, &c., the Thracians resemble the Greeks; the excellence of Thracian swords is praised; the goblet, "exceeding fair," taken by Priam as one of his greatest treasures to form part of Hector's ransom, and given by the old man to his kindly guide Hermes, had been presented to him by men of Thrace; finally, the wine which the heroes drink is Thracian wine; and Thracian wine is still lauded by Archilochus.

The vine, no doubt, is indigenous to Thrace and grows wild at this day in the dense forests of the Pontus and Thrace as Grisebach has proved; nevertheless vine-culture, such as is implied in the systematic manufacture and exportation of wine, implies that the people engaged in it have reached the third stage of civilisation (see *ante*, p. 33). They must be formed into orderly communities and protected by law and justice before such a state of things is possible. Hence, although we say with Helbig that Thracian culture was but a "shortlived hothouse plant," yet we can neither deny to the Thracians the possession of this culture in very early times, nor the possibility that it may have influenced the culture of Hellas.

The chief objection to the theory lies rather in this, that the Greeks themselves were essentially a poetical people, delighting, as far back as we can trace them, in music and song. Why, then, should their first experiment in either be due to an impulse from without—from a strange people?

Certainly the "sweet Linos-song," that plaintive melody which, according to Homer, was sung during the vintage, is supposed to be of Semitic origin, the lament for Adonis, and to take its name from the refrain—*ai lenu!* "woe to us!" Nevertheless the impulse, or rather (as Bergk truly puts it) the "necessity" to ennoble life and adorn it by poetry, lay far too deeply in the Hellenic nature for us to imagine that it came to them from without. We cannot for a moment suppose that the first songs of Greece were either of Thracian or of Semitic origin.

To arrive at any *positive* conclusion regarding the Græco-Thracians is, therefore, not within our power. We may follow the old writers and some geographers of the present day, and believe that they founded cities, as Daulis and Thespiæ, and waged wars, as in the struggle between Eleusis and Athens (to be mentioned later). Or, we may assume with Helbig (and in this assumption the writer is disposed to concur) that the association of the Muses and Orpheus (and of Eumolpus also) with the Thracian district of Pieria "may probably have been based upon a reminiscence that once in a northern district, afterwards reckoned as a 'barbarous' one, there had prevailed a characteristic intellectual movement," a movement which we may also conclude spread

southwards and acted as a stimulus to Hellenic genius, preserving to the end in the "Thracian tradition, traces of its origin."

We may note, however, in passing, that the cults of Dionysus and of Ares are of Thracian origin, and that the transformation of Dionysus from a Thracian into an Hellenic deity undoubtedly took place in Bœotia, and is interwoven with the sagas of Thebes and Orchomenus. His mother, Semele, and her sister Ino, wife of Athemas, are the daughters of Cadmus, whilst a third daughter, Agave, is the mother of that unfortunate king of Thebes, Pentheus, who is torn in pieces because of his refusal to recognise his relative a god. Quite in keeping with the gloomy sagas of Thebes, moreover, is the fierceness which, from first to last, characterised the cult of Dionysus in Bœotia.<sup>1</sup>

### THE IONIANS OF PELOPONNESUS AND OF ATTICA

In the name of the great race that now engages our attention, we have the appellation under which the Greeks entered into the history of the world. Just as to the rude tribes of the West the people of the Balkan peninsula become known generally as Græci or Greeks, so it is as Ionians that they are first mentioned to the nations of the East. This mention occurs in the Hebrew Scriptures: Javan, the son of Japhet<sup>2</sup>—the Ionian; the isles of Elisha, whence blue and purple dyes are brought to Tyre,<sup>3</sup> probably denote the coast of Elis and those Greek islands, such as Cythera and Eubœa, where was obtained the *murex* or purple *mollusc*. In the East, then, the name "Ionian" denoted the Greeks generally, a fact which can only be explained, like the name Græci, on the supposition that these tribes were the first met with by foreign people.

The name "Ionian" itself has received two different interpretations; it is thought by some to mean "the younger people," whilst others connect it with the root *i*, "to go" (as in Hyperion, "he who moves on high"—*i.e.* the sun). Without presuming to decide as to which was the original signification, we can see that the latter etymology describes in the happiest way the character of the race—the Ionians were most emphatically a people "always on the alert"; a people with "go," life, movement, energy in themselves. They were destined after a long preparatory discipline, and the admixture, perhaps, of a steady element, to take the lead in the experiments of Hellas.

The Ionians are, as we have seen, conspicuous by their absence from the Great Plain of Hellas. They appear, as Dr. Müller quaintly puts it, "suddenly, from the beginning (*urplötzlich*), as though fallen from heaven in Attica and Ægialeia."

The explanation of this phenomenon, formerly held and worked out in the most fascinating way by E. Curtius, viz., that the Ionians were an Aryan tribe that had settled first in Asia Minor and then crossed directly into Greece, must be abandoned now that the evidence of language indicates the north as the point from which Greece was entered by the united Græco-Aryans. We must therefore assume that the Ionians were a "younger" tribe, in the sense that they came late, found the Great Plain occupied, and continued their wanderings at once to the south.

Here, we must imagine them as settling first on the coasts—in Ægialeia, "the coast-land," the northern edge of Peloponnesus, bordering on the

<sup>1</sup> See the article "Dionysus," in *Hellas*.

<sup>2</sup> Genesis xi. 10.

<sup>3</sup> Isaiah xxiii. 1-12; Ezekiel xxvii. 6; Daniel xi. 30.



Corinthian Gulf; whence they probably found their way to the sea known later by their name as the Ionian Sea, and the Ionian Isles—Cephalenia, Zacynthus, Ithaca; in Trœzen, on the eastern shores of Argolis, on the Saronic Gulf; on the Isthmus; on both sides of the Euripus, in Boeotia and the island of Eubœa. We find them, finally, in the country which they were destined to render so famous—Attica, “the wave-beaten land”; but their settlement here, if we are to judge from the sagas, may possibly be a little later.

Thus, the names which the Ionians gave to two of their settlements—Ægialeia, “coastland”; Attica, “the wave-beaten”—described them all. In all the Wandering, Moving Folk of Hellas, developed, like the Little Folk, an intense love for the sea. Poseidon, lord of water and of waves, was the tribal god of the Ionians, as of the Minyæ, and in his honour they built a famous sanctuary at Helice on the Corinthian Gulf.

**The Ionians of Ægialeia.**—The earliest history of the Ionian coastland is picturesque, but confused. We know that the people formed a *dodecapolis*, or union of twelve separate communities—a feature peculiar to the Ionian race; that they offered common sacrifices to Poseidon at Helice; that the leading city was Meeōne (connected with the myth of Prometheus), the later Sicyōn, connected with the saga of Adrastus, the only hero who returns alive from the War of the Seven against Thebes.

**Ionians of Trœzen.**—To the south-east of the Isthmus, bounded by it on the west, and enclosed between the two great peninsulas of Attica on the east and Argolis on the west, lies the broad and beautiful Saronic Gulf; in its midst the rock-bound island of Ægina—leading out to the open sea—and the island-streams. Down the western side of the Saronic Gulf the Ionians wandered and settled, some at Epidaurus (where according to tradition, they found foreigners, Carians, in possession) but the major body probably in Trœzenia, the south-east corner of the Argolic peninsula, where they were snugly shut in from Epidaurus by mountains.

The reader will recollect the grand view which we formerly enjoyed with E. Curtius from the citadel of Trœzēn: the bold volcanic peninsula of Methana; the beautiful plain and hills; the blue sea and islands—that view the charms of which the saga summed up in the name of Euopis, “fair face” (p. 67). Now we call attention to a little island close to the coast of Trœzēn, separated from it only by a narrow strait, Calauria (Poros), the seat of a very ancient cult of Poseidon and the centre of the ancient Amphictyony, or League, to which we have already referred and which includes the maritime cities of Hermione, Epidaurus, Ægina, Athens, Prasîæ, Nauplia, and Orchomenus.

No better spot than the sheltered roads of Calauria, convenient both for Northern Greece and for Peloponnesus, could have been selected for the meeting of different races, the laying aside of distrust, and the offering in common of sacrifices to the great invisible Ruler of the Sea. Yet one circumstance strikes us as strange. Calauria lies off, and really forms part of, Trœzēnian territory, and yet Trœzēn does not appear in the League—a curious fact difficult to explain. Possibly, as Bursian suggests, the possession of the island may have been in very early days the object of a prolonged struggle between the neighbouring cities of Trœzēn and Hermione (as Athens and Megara struggled for Salamis). The quarrel may finally have been decided by the intervention of other States, and an arrangement that the island should be neutral ground. The exclusion of Trœzēn may then have arisen from her too close proximity and jealousy of her growing sea-power. In any case, Trœzēn possessed in her harbour, Pogon, “the beard” (so called from its shape), compensation enough. From first to last, the Trœzēnian coast

has been associated with deeds of seamanship and daring; at Pogos the combined fleets of the Greek States assembled in the great struggle for freedom, just before the battle of Salamis; and Poros, the ancient Calauria, has played a prominent part in the great struggle of our own days, the Wars of Independence.

Leaving, however, the Peloponnesian Ionians for a brief space, let us take a glance at the future home of a part of the race, Attica, the great peninsula of Middle Greece, the triangle which, with its base fixed among the hills, its apex pointing southward, runs down joyously among the waves that dash upon it on all three sides and gave it its name—"the wave-beaten." Truly, a fitting home for the Moving Folk, the restless, energetic coast folk!

The Ionians, however, were not apparently the first inhabitants of the land—they had been preceded by the ubiquitous Pelasgi. Arriving in the country, from the north, with these first immigrants, their flocks and herds, and climbing with them, for "prospecting" purposes, to the top of one of the numerous Attic heights, let us look at the scene below with their eyes. What do we see?

First, hills in abundance—hills to the east, hills to the west, hills everywhere—for Attica, tiny land as it is (one-eighth the size of Yorkshire),<sup>1</sup> is bounded and intersected by no fewer than seven distinct mountain ranges—to say nothing of isolated heights and crags. Lying amongst the hills are three plains—one, a small one, in the north-east, isolated and cut off by the hills; another, on the west of a range running down from the north mountain boundary to the sea, a third to the east of this range more towards the centre of the peninsula and under our eyes. This central plain is covered by a poor, thin soil, and in it rises a group of four low heights; on either side of the group flows a little river.

Nothing very tempting here, we think. What is this insignificant circumscribed space compared to the vast sweep of the Thessalian Plain, or the majesty of the Spartan valley with the grand range of Taygetus?

Ah, but look again—look beyond! See how the central plain opens on to the sea, how it ends—in a peninsula with a magnificent natural harbour and smaller ones to boot! Look beyond these—on the west—to the blue Saronic Gulf, bounded by the grand outline of the Argolic mountains and the great mass of Acrocorinthus. Or, look to the east, to the glittering Ægæan, with the mountains of Eubœa, and the long chain of islands, visible as far as Siphnus and Paros; and stretching beyond right to the Asiatic coast! Compared with the brilliancy, the expansiveness of such a scene as this, it is the Spartan valley and the Thessalian Plain that alike become monotonous and circumscribed.

Contemplating the breadth and scope and constant variety of the scene, we can understand better the many-sidedness, the freedom from prejudice, of the race that grew up under its influence. For the little central plain before us is the Plain of Athens; the two rivers are the Ilissus and the Cephissus; that oblong rock in the middle is destined to be the "queenly Acropolis," the centre of the intellectual world; that other rock to the west, "crawling like a huge dragon" towards the first, is the Areiopagus, Mars' Hill of coming years; the low height west of this again will one day be black with human beings as an ant-hill with ants, for this is the Pnyx of the future, the place of assembly of the free sovereign people of Athens; finally, that fourth hill, the last of the group, will not be passed over, it will be consecrated, as the Museum, to the memory of a sweet singer of the olden times—the "Thracian" Musæus.

<sup>1</sup> Yorkshire has an area of 5983 square miles; Attica, including the Island of Salamis, one of 740 square miles.



Inspiring as the scene is to us, it must nevertheless have seemed desolate and unpromising enough to these first "prospectors"—a sandy plain, four little hills, two streamlets. If there were any "men of many cows" among them, they must have stood aghast at the prospect. In these days they were not even in a position to appreciate adequately the grand maritime advantages of the situation, for, as we know, long centuries elapsed before they profited fully by them, and the Peiræus was not utilised as a harbour till the time of Themistocles.

Notwithstanding, whatever objections may have been brought forward against remaining in Attica were overruled. Probably the "many-cow-ed men," the wealthy members of the tribe, retreated north into Boeotia, "congenial land of kine." The others settled in the central plain; and here, round the queenly rock—Cecropia, later the Acropolis—grew up in time a city, violet-crowned—

"Built nobly; pure the air, and light the soil;  
Athens, the eye of Greece, mother of arts  
And eloquence, native to famous wits,  
Or hospitable."

Here, in less than one line, a poet has summed up what would take ordinary mortals a page to describe. In Milton's

"Pure the air and light the soil"

we have both the magnet of attraction to those within and the drawback which, fortunately, left the land unmolested by foes from without. As Thucydides tells us, whereas the more fertile parts of Hellas were, because of their fertility, more exposed to attacks from without, "Attica, of which the soil was poor and thin, enjoyed a long freedom from civil strife."

Pure, indeed, is the air of Athens, and the climate of itself sufficient to make existence pleasurable. We have already dwelt on the advantages enjoyed by Athens in that respect over other parts of Greece: its 179 days in the year when the sun is not hidden even for a moment; its 157 days when the sky is overcast perhaps for half-an-hour; its grand total of 336 sunny days as compared with the 79 of the chill north (p. 23). This wondrous immunity of Athens from cloud and fog is explained scientifically by the fact that, no sooner do the moist west and south-west winds come into contact with the dry heated air streaming upwards from the Athenian Plain, than the watery vapour which they hold volatilises and disperses, instead of condensing. The result is that clouds are very seldom formed over Athens itself. Nor till the air-currents reach the colder heights of Pentelicus, and specially of Parnes, does the sudden cooling effect a condensation of the vapour, and mist-caps hang over the peaks of the mountains. Athens thus often resembles a "sunny island in an environment of cloud."

Let us note, moreover, that with all this sunshine, the climate is not enervating, like the oppressive heat of Messenia. Look again at the position and shape of Attica—as we have just seen it—a triangular peninsula, with the sea beating on every side except the north, and it will become evident that all the winds that blow have free access to it—cooling the heat of summer, moderating the cold of winter. The Athenians must have been very well acquainted with their rough relative, Boreas, "the North Wind," and had many a tussle with him before they could conceive such a myth as that of his carrying off their princess, Oreithyia, "the Mist-maiden."

Attica, again, is a hilly land, and although none of her mountains are very

lofty, yet there is not one that is not rugged enough to tax in the ascent both lungs and limbs.

Thus we may fairly say that the climate of Attica was, as Plato averred, well calculated to develop a race that should be lovers both of war and of wisdom. Its bracing influence it shares with other parts of Greece—its sunshine it has in unique abundance, and without regard to these physical factors we shall hardly understand the unique character of the Athenian people. "Whosoever has an eye to the peculiar beauty of the landscape," said E. Curtius, once, on returning from a visit to Greece, "such an one will thank his Creator for the first Attic sunny day that shines into his book-studies." In that sunshine he will understand how Athenians developed an "all-round" culture, whilst nations less happily placed, were devoting every energy to the procuring of the bare means of subsistence; in that sunshine he will see them pass their daily lives—"legislating, worshipping, witnessing dramatic performances" beneath the open heavens; in that sunshine, finally, he will see placed the finest works of art, where all could see and enjoy them without fear of rain or injury from damp,<sup>1</sup> works of art which act as educators of the people, and which with us are hidden away in galleries and museums.

The Athenians of the Historic period—sons of Erechtheus wandering in æther, as Euripides calls them—were never weary of singing the praises of their climate. To it the ancients generally attributed the clearness of the Attic intellect, and the (presumed) superiority of the Athenians over their befogged Boëtian neighbours.

Then if the bright, joyous climate was *the* attraction of Attica, do not let us forget that even the supposed drawback—"light the soil"—was really, as we have said elsewhere (p. 25), a blessing in disguise. Thanks to its poverty, as Thucydides tells us, no other people coveted the land. From the earliest times, Attica experienced few such troubles as befell the richer districts—Thessaly and Boëtia—and kept in peace its old inhabitants. Hence the belief of the Athenians that they themselves were *autochthones*, indigenous to, or sprung from, the soil. Hence also the cause, or one cause, of their developing the peaceful arts of life sooner than the other tribes. The beginnings of agriculture are associated with the saga of the deep-soiled Triptolemus and plain of Eleusis—the only really fertile part of the land—and Thucydides expressly mentions the fact that the Athenians were the first of the Hellenes to discontinue the practice of carrying weapons for offence and defence in every-day life.

On turning, now, to the early history of Attica, one must own to a feeling of disappointment. When we have recalled the native myths of Proene and Philomela (the Nightingale and the Swallow), of Cephalus and Procris (the Morning-star and the Moon), of Boreas and Oreithyia (the North-wind and the Mist), and the legends of Ion and the Kings, with which the native myths are interwoven, we have run through the catalogue of the early period. Compared to the sagas of Thebes and Argos, those of Attica are poor indeed. We must suppose, in addition, that many of the Attic sagas were the work of later hands. There are few allusions to them in Homer, and these few, in Preller's judgment, would have been fewer still but for the "literary industry" of Attic writers in the time of Peisistratus (the sixth century B.C.).

However, that the saga-treasure of Attica was poor, is to be attributed to the immunity from disturbance which the land enjoyed. Where there are no violent changes to chronicle, there are, as a matter of course, few traditions, and little "history." Nevertheless, Attica would seem, after all, not to have

<sup>1</sup> To this statement must be made an exception as regards works in ivory, which were necessarily placed under cover.



been so entirely free from invasion as her people imagined. The legends may be divided into two groups: (1) those associated with the names of Cecrops and Erichthonius, and (2) those connected with the changes typified by Ægeus and Theseus.

1. The Attic sagas, like those of Argos, certainly go far enough back. They begin with the first man, but whereas the Argive Phoroneus is only the offspring of a tree, the Attic Cecrops springs, at first hand, like the gods themselves, from Mother Earth. This "fact" the Athenians set forth in the body—half-human, half-serpent—wherewith they depicted him, denoting thereby the secret and mysterious working of the powers of Nature, the result of which is expressed in the name Cecrops, supposed to refer both to fruit and harvest. Cecrops, however, is not only the representative of agriculture, but of the two great elements of Attic life—religion and politics. It is he who plants the worship of Zeus Hypatos (Highest God) on the citadel, and introduces the cult of Athena as Polias, guardian of the city. It is Cecrops, finally, who concentrates the many scattered hamlets of Attica into twelve cities, evidently a later Ionian addition to the saga, in imitation of the Dodekapolis of Ægialeia. It is more probable that, at this very early period, the inhabitants of Attica dwelt in scattered independent communities, united together in threes and fours by a sacred tie, the cult of some special patron god. All worshipped Zeus, the Father; and in addition, the people of the western plain, the most fertile part of the land, were devoted to Demeter, goddess of the grain-giving earth; the people round Cecropia, the Acropolis of the central plain (the later Athens), worshipped Athena (the Dew-giver); and the dwellers in the third plain, the district of Marathon in the north-east, formed themselves into a Tetrapolis, or league of four cities, devoted to Heracles and Apollo, and later to Dionysus.

It is rather surprising, at first sight, to find the Athenians claiming another *Urmann*, a second serpent-bodied ancestor, Erichthonius or Erechtheus. The anomaly is explained by the later myth which made Cecrops an Egyptian—a myth which, like that of the Egyptian origin of Danaus in Argos, arose at the time when resemblances between the myths of Egypt and those of Greece began to be traced. It then became necessary to have a native genius, about whose Attic birth there could be no doubt, and this native genius is represented by Erichthonius—Erechtheus—originally one and the same individual, but separated by later myth-makers into two personalities—Erichthonius the grandfather, Erechtheus the grandson.

Both are "doubles" of Cecrops, representatives of Agriculture, and devoted to the cult of Athena. "Erichthonius" has been interpreted as "Rich land" (G. Curtius), and the saga makes a brother of Erechtheus, "Butes," the Herdsman, the inventor of the art of guiding the plough and driving oxen. Erechtheus is said to have been brought up by Athena in her temple of the Acropolis; he founded in her honour the Panathenaic Festival, believed to be, with the Eleusinian, the oldest in Greece. The temple of the Erechtheum, erected on the Acropolis by the Athenians to their serpent-bodied ancestor, was supposed to be watched over by a guardian serpent, for whom was placed every month in historic times a honey-cake.

With Erechtheus also is connected the saga of the "Eleusinian War," a tradition which developed more and more, and assumed ever grander proportions. Into the western plain of Eleusis, the most fertile part of Attica, according to the saga, a tribe of the "Thracians," whom we saw settled on the slopes of Helicon, had penetrated, and it was not until after a prolonged struggle, which the tradition centred in the persons of Erechtheus of Athens and Eumolpus of

Eleusis, that the western plain submitted to the central. Victory over the former could only be obtained by a voluntary sacrifice—the youngest daughter of Erechtheus offered herself as the victim. On her death her sisters, who could not live without her, slew themselves, and thus the whole family of the Erechthidæ came to an end, martyred in the cause of the Fatherland.

As we have seen, the presence of “Thracians” in Eleusis is extremely doubtful. The story by which Erechtheus subdued Eumolpus, the “Sweet Singer” of Eleusis, may have originated in the religious rivalry between the agriculturists in the central plain under the protection of Athena, and those in the western plain under that of Demeter.

That a genuine historic kernel lies at the root of the story is, however, borne out by the numerous remains of walls and towers on the hill-chain (Ægaleos) which divides the two plains; this was apparently the ancient Attic boundary, and may have been the scene of many a battle. The independence of Eleusis in early days may also be inferred from the power they possessed in historic times—the direction of the great Temple of Demeter and Persephone, and the right of coining money.

The earliest names in the first group of sagas were increased by later additions—Ogyges (who also appears in Bœotia), a representative of the Deluge; Actæus, of Attica<sup>1</sup> itself; Cranaus, of the rocky soil of the land (hence Herodotus calls the first Athenians Cranai); Amphictyon, of political renown; further, Pandion and Ion.

Returning, however, to the genuine nucleus, we can see that the legends of Cecrops and Erichthonius, the genii of Harvest and Good Land, must have sprung up amongst an agricultural people, and both, as we have seen, are devoted to Athena. The daughter of Cecrops, the three Dew-sisters—Pandrosus, the All-moistening, Herse, the Dew, and Aglaurus, the Glistening—are the first priestesses of the goddess, herself the Dew-giver, and consequently in a climate such as that of the Athenian plain, the Grain-giver.

2. Another element is, however, presently introduced into the old saga. A rival to Athena, goddess of Agriculture, appears in the shape of Poseidon, Lord of the Sea, and Cecrops is called upon to be umpire in the dispute as to which has the better right to the land and the homage of its people. He decides in favour of Athena, pronouncing her gift to Attica of the olive-tree a more valuable one than that of Poseidon, the sea or the horse, the emblem of the galloping waves.

According to a later version of the story, in which the twelve Olympic gods themselves adjudicate upon the matter, Cecrops appears before them, and argues that the sea is open to *all*, but that Athena had given the olive specially to Attica (*cf.* p. 34), hence that the people of Attica were bound specially to honour her and cultivate the land. The cultivation of the soil was, indeed, long regarded by the Athenians as their special mission; and, as we know, this fixed idea proved later an obstacle in the way of Themistocles and his warlike preparations.

This new element in the old sagas—the contest between land and sea—pointing to the infusion of a new element into the old agricultural Pelasgic life, centres round the names of Ægeus and Theseus. Ægeus is probably a personification of Poseidon himself, *i.e.* the Ægean Sea; Theseus, like Minyas, the hero-ancestor of the Minyæ (p. 137) is his son. Theseus in the saga comes from Trœzen, the “fair-faced,” stronghold of the Ionians in the earliest as in later times. He is therefore held to be a representative of the race and of

<sup>1</sup> From *akte*, “a peninsula,” the rocky coast over which the waves break.



the settlement in Attica, the land of Athena, of the Ionians, the people of Poseidon.

The saga associates this occurrence with Theseus, as the national hero, but "Theseus" is a comparatively late name; and if such an invasion took place, it must have been in very early times, for, as we know, the people of Attica imagined their land to have been always left undisturbed amidst the migrations of the tribes. Certainly there seems to have been a close bond of union between Athens and Trœzên in historic times—both possessed the saga of a dispute between Poseidon and Athena about their respective lands; the oldest coins of Trœzên bore the Athena head on the one side, the trident of the sea-god on the other; it was in Trœzên that many Athenian families took refuge during the Persian War.

If Theseus himself, however, as the Ionian of Trœzên, points to one invasion of Attica, the story of his heroic deeds would seem to presuppose another. Theseus conquers the Amazons who have encamped on Areiopagus; he slays the fire-breathing bull of Marathon; he overcomes the Minotaur, the man-devouring bull of Crete, and thereby delivers the people of Attica from the tribute of children demanded by the monster and levied by Minos, King of Crete.

Who is meant by "Minos," and what the bondage was under which the Pelasgian inhabitants of Attica, tillers of the soil and goatherds, groaned until set free by Theseus, type of the energetic seafaring Ionians, we shall find out presently.

Meantime let us note that "Theseus," as the national hero, is the embodiment of all that is good and noble in the Athenian character. It is he, as Thucydides tells us, who accomplishes that great work, the union of the twelve Attic communes into *one* State, whose centre is Athens, where was henceforth the one council for the administration of the affairs of the whole land, and the one prytaneium or town-hall, with its sacred hestia, the hearth of the great family of the State. All this Theseus is represented as doing (and this is an intensely characteristic feature)—not by the strong hand of force, but—by the aid of Peitho, "persuasion," the might of reason and eloquence.

Theseus has often been compared to Heracles, but the comparison is hardly to the point. It is not the struggle with nature (personified in Heracles) that Theseus represents so much as the struggle with circumstance. He thus stands forth as the ideal of the Athenians themselves in their striving after freedom, independence, and unity, and in this sense he was developed more and more by later writers. In the hands of Sophocles he becomes the chivalrous protector of the weak, in those of Euripides he is a thorough democrat, whilst the masses of the people knew him in both characters, for his temple was an asylum for fugitive slaves.

To sum up, the first group of Attic sagas, in the names of Cecrops and Erechtheus, symbolises the first stage of Attic life, the Pelasgian stage, which witnessed the beginnings of agriculture and of settled city life.

The second group, under the names of Ægeus (Poseidon) and Theseus, gathers together traditions early and late; indicates the presence amid the Pelasgians of a new race-element, the Ionian, with the collateral ideas of the development of navigation and of a true political life.

If, again, the original Attic sagas are themselves somewhat meagre, we must not forget that it was Attic genius which gave to many of the sagas of the other people of Hellas that imperishable beauty which has preserved them to our day. What charm or interest would the stories of Ædipus and Antigone, of Iphigenia and Medea possess for us now, but for the form into which they were thrown by the great tragic writers of Athens?

Finally, we may not overlook another fact of the utmost importance, viz., that the special religions of Attica, those of Athena and Demeter, are the purest and most beautiful of Hellas. At Eleusis grew up that cult of the two goddesses—Demeter and Corê, the mother and the daughter—which was destined to have so profound an influence not only on Greece, but on the whole ancient world—that most beautiful of the Nature cults, which, more than any other of the old religions, satisfied to some extent the longings of human souls, and prepared the way among the Gentiles for a higher and a truer hope.

The further development of the saga of Theseus begins, as we have hinted, with the development of the Athenian people. Here, therefore, we leave them. We leave them to struggle into the consciousness of national life, of their own powers, of all that awaited them—to find out by actual experiment how wondrously in every detail their land corresponded to their needs. Surely, when we reflect on its maritime position, its harbours, its stores of finest marble, of plastic clay, its invigorating breezes, its pure air and genial sunshine, we must say once more—hundreds of times as it has been said before—never was land so suited to its people, never were people so suited to their land, as Attica to the Athenians, the Athenians to Attica.

### PELASGI, DANAANS, AND ACHÆANS OF PELOPONNESUS

As we saw in our last chapters, Pelasgi from the Great Plain had settled both in Bœotia and in Attica. We must now follow the fortunes of other bands of the same race, who, like the Ionians, went still farther south, and crossed the isthmus into Peloponnesus. Some of these Pelasgian wanderers penetrated into the great mountain-land in the centre of the peninsula—the Switzerland of Greece—Arcadia. Here, pent up among their hills, they speedily forgot the outer world and their migration therefrom; and here we may leave them—to develop into numerous tribes of brave and hardy mountaineers, with all the virtues and all the failings incident to their secluded life (see *ante*, p. 6). As experimenters, the Arcadians do not concern us at present.

Leaving also another band to develop under the name of “Achæans” in the valley of the Eurotas, we now direct our attention to a third company of Pelasgi, who found their way into the hill-girt easterly plain of Peloponnesus, the Plain of Argos.

This plain, which became, as we shall presently see, a famous centre of legendary history, is really, like so many of the Greek plains, a deep basin encircled by mountains on all sides except the south, where it is open to the sea. In bygone ages the “plain” must have been a bay, the innermost recesses of the Gulf of Argos, penetrating far into the land. In progress of time the bay gradually became filled up by the earthy deposits brought down from the hills by the torrents and rivers, the great land-builders of Greece,<sup>1</sup> and thus, formed by layer upon layer of detritus, the plain appeared. To this, its watery origin, the low, swampy ground on the coast, the “egg-shell of its birth,” still bears witness; and to it may perhaps be attributed also the saga of the contest between Poseidon and Hera for the possession of Argos. Poseidon is worsted—*i.e.* the sea recedes, and Hera becomes the tutelary deity of the land, with the further consequence that Poseidon takes his revenge by

<sup>1</sup> See Part I., “Rivers as land-builders,” *ante*, p. 59.



drying up its rivers, and the plain becomes the "thirsty Argos" of Homer and of history.

The earliest inhabitants of the plain of whom we have any record are, as stated above, the ubiquitous Pelasgi. Here, in the sunny, fertile, hill-protected district—to which they gave the name peculiar to the race, Argos—they pitched their tents, at the foot of a gigantic rock (the eastern part of Lycone, a spur running out from Artemisium) which stands above the plain to a height of nearly 1000 feet. This became, again, their Larissa, or citadel—like Ephyra, the Watch-tower, a safe refuge in times of danger—and round this stately acropolis grew up the settlement which developed later into the historic city of Argos.

Round the Larissa grew up also in time a cycle of sagas. Naught knew the authors of these of any old Thessalian, much less of any old Aryan, home. Like their Arcadian brethren, they believed themselves to be Autochthones; they imagined themselves to have sprung up in the land. Later, the Argives of history claimed to be the oldest of the Hellenes—an assumption in which they were supported by the fact that the historical recollections of the Hellenes reached no further back than "ancient Argos." The sagas of Argos divide themselves naturally into three groups or periods:—

1. Here first grew up the saga of Phoroneus, the *Urkönig*, the primæval king of the land, son of the Inachus, its chief river—hence also its great land-builder and fertiliser—and the nymph Melia, the Ash—a genealogy pointing to that old belief according to which man is the offspring of a tree.<sup>1</sup> Phoroneus—from his name (*i.e.*, *bearer*) the representative of the productive soil of the land—is, therefore, according to Argive tradition, not only the first king, but the first man; and not only so, but he is the first introducer of civilisation, the bringer of fire (like Prometheus),<sup>2</sup> and the founder of the special cult of the land, the worship of Hera on Mount Eubœa. His wife is called sometimes Kerdo (the prudent, she who gains), sometimes Telodike (the spreader of justice), sometimes Peitho (the power of persuasion)—all names, as Preller points out, indicative of new features in the development of settled order and intercourse among citizens. The son of Phoroneus is that Apis, from whom some writers supposed Peloponnesus to have taken its name of Apia.<sup>3</sup>

Finally, we note in this first cycle of Argive sagas that a daughter of the old river-god Inachus, is Io (the Moon), that pitiful heroine, whose wrongs, sufferings, wanderings, and final arrival in Egypt play so important a part in Greek mythology. Let us note also that this same Io, under the name of Kallithyia (the lovely enthusiast) figures, as the first of the Priestesses of Hera in that long list which was used by the Greek chronologists, and we shall have some idea (as observed at the outset) how the oldest Greek "history" was written.

2. In the second group of sagas we meet with the people of the plain at a higher level of civilisation—they are no longer called Pelasgi but Danaans—that is, the people of Danaus, the Giver, the man who taught them how to dig wells, how to irrigate the land, and, by supplying her lack of moisture, induce Mother Earth to give up her fruits. The prime necessity of irrigation in a land like "thirsty Argos," and the relation of the Danaids, the fifty daughters of Danaus, to the springs and rivers of the land, we have already pointed out (see *ante*, pp. 58, 59). Danaus, however, is not only the first well-

<sup>1</sup> See paragraph 11 on the "Origin of the Human Race," *Hellas* p. 91.

<sup>2</sup> Pott derives Phoroneus from *phero*—to bear. Kulm compares the name with the Indian Bhuranya—the down-rushing, *i.e.* the lightning.

<sup>3</sup> See, however, *ante*, footnote to p. 31.

digger, but the first builder of the city of Argos, the *hestia* or "sacred hearth" of which had been founded by Phoroneus.<sup>1</sup>

In the saga, moreover, he figures as an Egyptian, the descendant of Io, and although this part of the story is an addition of later times, the whole points to the infusion of another element—an element of progress—into the old Pelasgian life. Homer calls the people of Argos indifferently Danaans and Achæans.

3. The next saga, that of Proetus, gives even more unmistakable evidence of progress. This evidence is still before our eyes.

Climbing to the top of the Larissa, and looking across the Inachus, we see, rising in the south-east of the plain, a group of small flat hills, originally islands in the old sea-floor. On the most westerly of these, low and easily accessible, are the remains of a very ancient fortress, the "well-walled Tiryns" of Homer—the first city in the plain, fortified by art, not like the Larissa on the height, defended by nature—some twenty-five feet thick, built of stones so enormous that, as Pausanias says (with some exaggeration truly), "a team of mules could scarcely move one of them," the mighty walls of Tiryns have defied the storms of the ages.

Men have come—Pelasgians, Phœnicians, Lycians, Achæans, Dorians, Romans, the Frank and the Turk—and men have gone, but the old walls of Tiryns bid fair to hold on for ever.

The question naturally arises, Who built these walls? The later Greeks themselves did not believe them to have been the work of their ancestors. Walls so stupendous could only have been reared by dæmonic agency.

Hence the saga: Proetus is a descendant of Danaus, driven from Argos by his brother Acrisius, he takes refuge in Lycia, where he is hospitably received, and returns triumphantly to his birth-land with a band of warlike Lycians, who restore him to his rights. Acrisius, "the king of the heights," retains, indeed, Argos and the soaring Larissa; but for Proetus, "the Eager-for-War," Lycian Cyclopes (one-eyed dæmons) build the well-walled city of Tiryns, on the eastern side of the Inachus. So then, according to the story, the great fortress of Tiryns was erected by foreign help to defend the brother in the plain from the brother on the height. Is there a grain of truth here? We shall examine the question presently.

Meanwhile, to return to the old city of Argos, it now appears as the centre of the most famous group of sagas belonging to this second cycle—those connected with the great Sun-hero and slayer of the Powers of Night, Perseus, the story of whose mother, Danae, cast adrift on the sea with her babe by her cruel father, Acrisius, has been so touchingly told by Simonides. Into the wondrous adventures of this altogether mythical hero, we cannot enter here. Suffice it, that Eastern elements mingle abundantly with them—that Perseus rescues from the dragon of Darkness an Æthiopian princess, whom he marries; that their child is Perseus, the founder of the Persian royal dynasty, a "fact" acknowledged by Xerxes; that Perseus, on his return to his native land, unwittingly kills his grandfather, Acrisius; that he can no longer dwell in the city of the slain, and consequently exchanges Argos with his cousin, a son of Proetus, for Tiryns; that, finally, he builds (again with the help of Lycian Cyclopes), the third great city of the plain, Mycenæ, and becomes the founder of the Perseid royal house, from whom there springs another Sun-hero, the greatest of all—Heracles.

Some writers represent the latter as having been born at Tiryns—the

<sup>1</sup> For the importance of the "sacred hearth" to a city, see *Hellas* under "*Hestia*," p. 163.



mightiest of heroes within the mightiest of walls. This mistake, however, is not one which the oldest sagas could fall into. Like the god of Light, Apollo himself, whose mother is Leto, the dark Night, and who struggles into life with difficulty; and, like his prototype Perseus, who is also born in darkness underground, and encounters misfortune as soon as he breathes, so Heracles the great Hellenic example of energy overcoming danger and difficulty, is born an exile, at Thebes, on Ceta.

As the son of an elder branch of the Perseid family, Heracles should himself have succeeded to the throne of Mycenæ instead of Eurystheus, the weak-minded cousin whom he serves. Eurystheus, however, will not acknowledge even the claim of Hyllus, the son of Heracles, and is slain by him in battle; whereupon the sceptre of Mycenæ is seized by Atreus, member of an alien race, known later as that of the Pelopidæ.

Such, in brief, is the early legendary history of Argos. Useless for purposes of real history as are the details of such traditions—details in which, as already observed, the Moon and two Sun-heroes figure as historical personages—it is yet necessary that we should make ourselves acquainted with them, for the descent of the mythical Heracles from the no less mythical Perseus is the pivot on which by tradition the state of affairs in historical Greece is made to turn. It was the claim of certain individuals to be the genuine descendants of Heracles, and therefore the representatives of the Perseids, the real royal line of Argos as opposed to the descendants of Atreus and his son Agamemnon, the representatives of the Pelopids, or usurpers in Argos, which led to the result called the Return of the Herakleids or the Dorian Invasion of Peloponnesus, an event which is generally regarded as in itself an historical fact—whatever in reality may have been its cause.

Who then, is this Atreus, the usurper, the founder of the new lines of rulers in Mycenæ? According to later sagas, he is the son of Pelops, who, again, is the son of Tantalus, King of Lydia, that ancient evil-doer who, in the Odyssey, is seen expiating his wicked deeds in the lower world. But Homer knows nothing of Pelops; he only speaks of Atreus and the Atridæ, his sons Agamemnon and Menelaus. Still less does Homer know anything of the fearful crimes of the race, or the "doom" hanging over it. All this was invented at a later date.

According to another tradition, Atreus was the uncle of the weak Eurystheus. As Thucydides tells us, on the death of the latter, "because he seemed a valiant man, he received, with the consent of the people, lordship over Mycenæ and all that belonged to Eurystheus."

Atreus then took up his abode at Mycenæ, the third city of the plain, whose mighty walls still stand, like those of Tiryns, to bear witness to the power of their builders. Great interest centres round the old feudal stronghold, round which circle the third group of the legends of Argos. From it comes forth Agamemnon, shepherd of the host, clad in his flashing bronze, and stands in the national sanctuary, the Heræum, on the slopes of Eubœa, to administer the oath of fealty to the princes, who join the league against Troy, as Homer tells us he stood in later days in the Plain of the Scamander—"with head and eyes like to Zeus"—a veritable king of men, marshalling the ranks of the mail-clad Achæans. And in this dark fortress grows up the sweet bud Iphigeneia, lured away to be the bride of Death; in it her lady-mother Clytemnestra nurses her terrible vengeance, in it she meets requital at the hand of her son Orestes. In this same dark mountain-fortress we have, in short, "the spot chosen for the central stage of Greek tragedy," and round it cycle the sagas immortalised by an Æschylus, a Sophocles, a Euripides. In

our own day the eyes of the world have again been drawn to this "nook of horse-pasturing Argos" by the researches of Dr. Schliemann, which will engage our attention immediately.

Meanwhile, leaving Mycenæ with its lion-watchers, guardians of the old citadel through the ages, we ask, as we asked concerning Tiryns, Who built it? And we ask further, Whence comes the flashing bronze of Agamemnon? And yet again, How have our hide-clad Pelasgians become metamorphosed into mail-clad Achæans?

By superhuman agency, say the sagas. Not only have the mighty walls of Tiryns and Mycenæ been raised by wheel-eyed Cyclopes from Asia, but the forging of the flashing armour is also the invention of friendly dæmons, Dactyls and Telchines, who likewise hail from beyond the seas—the Dactyls from Phrygia and Crete, the Telchines from Cyprus and Rhodes. At first sight these fables afford no clue, yet when looked into they will be found to possess their grain of truth. The name "Dactyls" means "fingers," and "Telchines" is connected with "magic." The magic power by which the raw ore is converted into shining bronze is therefore simply the power of the fingers, and the clever manipulators who own these fingers come from the East.

Moreover, the ancient traditions of Argos concerning the beginnings of a higher civilisation culminate, be it noted, in the legends of Nauplia, the only seaport of the plain, a few miles to the south of Tiryns, and one of the most ancient cities of Argos. Here arose the saga of Nauplius, the crafty "double" of the Corinthian Sisyphus (p. 139) and his son, the noble Palamedes—inventors, according to the tradition, of lighthouses, of navigation itself, of weights and measures, of the games of draughts and dice, of reckoning, of letters—the personification, in short, of many of the arts which the later Greeks themselves believed to have been introduced from the East.

Strange to say the grand old Gibraltar Rock, which served as citadel to Nauplia, with its magnificent outlook over the Argive Plain and the coast of Laconia, bears to this day the name, in Venetian form, of the unfortunate hero, Palamidi. Hardly less strange is it that Nauplia, the traditional cradle of the oldest civilisation, should have become the first capital of liberated Greece—the Greece of our own day!

Yet, again, the very first picture drawn for us by the father of history is that of the Asiatic bazaar held at the mouth of the Inachus.

Thus myth, saga, and tradition preserved in history alike arouse our curiosity to find out the grain of truth hidden beneath them, the relations existing between early Greece and the East.

## THE OLDEST MONUMENTS OF GREECE

Before discussing the question of the connection of early Greece with the East, let us take a glance at the oldest monuments of the land. Not until we have made ourselves thoroughly familiar with these in their detail will it be possible for us to grasp the bearings of the subject upon the problem of the making of Hellas. And let us also pause to pay a passing tribute to one who has done more than any man of the century to elucidate the question, Dr. Heinrich Schliemann. Mr. Gladstone, in his Preface to Schliemann's *Mycenæ*, speaks of the author as "the spoilt child of fortune." A truer characterisation of the man would be, perhaps, that "hand-to-hand fighter" with fortune. The



son of a German Lutheran pastor, Schliemann was early left an orphan to struggle in the battle of life as best he could. Not until he had reached a mature age did he find himself free to carry out the dream of his life—the unearthing of Homer's "Troy." With rare courage, and that rarest of modern qualities, unswerving faith in a great idea, Schliemann set to work, and in the face of the scoffs of scholarly Europe, the ridicule of that large majority of easy-goers who hate an earnestness which they cannot themselves understand, and the very considerable obstacles put in his way by official greed and ignorance, he brought to light relics and treasures, which, if not recognised universally by the names bestowed upon them, in his enthusiasm, by their discoverer, are, nevertheless, of the utmost importance in the history of culture. The "Burnt City" on the hill of Hissarlik may or may not be Homer's "Ilion." The "Great Treasure" discovered therein may or may not have been secreted by a people who had grappled with the "Achæans"; the occupants of the pit graves of Mycenæ, with their astounding surroundings, may or may not have belonged to the great house of Atreus. All these are points on which every one is free to judge from the evidence for himself. One thing, however, is certain, that any one who would penetrate into the mystery of prehistoric times must stand with Dr. Schliemann on the excavated hill of Hissarlik, and look down into the yawning chasm below; must visit the wondrous grave-circle of Mycenæ; must explore the hidden chamber of the old fortress of Tiryns; must do all this in the spirit, not of a carping critic, but of a learner. Readers who are desirous of full information will, of course, go to the fountain-head—the works published by Schliemann under the titles respectively of *Troja*, *Mycenæ*, *Tiryns*, *Orchomenus*, all of which, except the last-named, have been translated into English. Those who wish a more condensed account of Dr. Schliemann's discoveries will turn to Schuchhardt's recent summary, of which there is also an English version published.

Here we cannot attempt more than a very brief *résumé* of the more salient points, taking them in connection with the various stages of culture which they illustrate, and glancing also, as we proceed, at the work of other explorers in the same field.

*The First Stage in Culture, the Nomadic Stage*, had been passed through by the Greeks, as we have seen, before they entered their historic home. The "Monuments" of this period are those contained in Language. (See Appendix and Part II.)

*The Second Stage of Culture.* We must ask the reader now to travel back with us again to that period from which we started—the later Stone Age of Europe, in which we saw our Græco-Aryans defiling up the glen of Tempê clad in sheep- and goat-skins, armed with stone weapons, using stone implements, and treasuring as of great price little ornaments of one metal, copper. The best realisation of this period is afforded us by the first (lowest) prehistoric city on the Hill of Hissarlik, in the Troas. Another embodiment of it is, however, presented to us on Greek soil, on the low rock of Tiryns. In the north-west corner of the Upper Citadel (shortly to be described) exist traces of an older settlement in the shape of rough walls and clay floors, lying deeper than the adjacent part of the palace. The vases and jars found here resemble closely the earthenware peculiar to the first city on Hissarlik. The potter's wheel is not, indeed, unknown, but by far the greater part of the vessels is hand-made, of reddish-yellow, tolerably well-burnt clay, without a handle, but provided with holes through which a string can be passed wherewith to lift the vessel. The attempts at ornamentation are very primitive—*e.g.* the upper edge of the vessel will be adorned with a series of round indentations, which

seem to have been made by the finger, whilst another favourite device is the so-called "fish-spine" pattern.

Let us not despise these rough efforts. In the pottery of an ancient people we see its first attempts at civilisation. Man has been defined as a "cooking animal," and these clumsy vessels prove to us, at the least, that he very early recognised a difference between himself and the brute creation.

In early times man was not only a "cooking" but a "washing (to some extent), cleansing, thrifty, looking-ahead, food-preserving animal." All this tallies very well with the picture previously sketched of the life of the earliest Pelasgian settlers in Thessaly. The people were comfortably off in their way, they had everything "within themselves," as we say, and needed not to barter, save for articles not obtainable by their own exertions. Amongst such articles we must class the rude knives and arrow-points of obsidian found in enormous quantities under the ruins of the palace at Tiryns and also at Mycenæ, for obsidian, a stone much prized by reason of its hardness, is found apparently only on the islands of Melos and Cimolus. Evidently, therefore, there must have existed a system of trading, of barter, and exchange even in these hoary days. In addition to the earthenware vessels and jars, and the obsidian knives and arrow-points, the oldest settlement at Tiryns has yielded a very curious object in the shape of a bead of blue cobalt glass. Whence came this? A question to be discussed presently. We can hardly imagine our Pelasgian herdsmen to have been initiated into the mysteries of glass-manufacture.

Finally, let us note that to suppose the inhabitants of the oldest Tirynthian settlement to have been of the same race as the inhabitants of the oldest Phrygian city on Hissarlik is by no means a necessary deduction from the similarity, the "family-likeness" existing between the objects found at both places. Similar "finds" have been made in various parts of Europe, Germany, Hungary, Italy, France. The "natural" primitive forms of the first necessary utensils and implements required by man are probably peculiar to no race in particular.

*Third Stage.* If the oldest Tirynthian settlement may be taken as illustrating the period of the history of Argos personified in Phoroneus (p. 157), the embodiment of the stage typified by Danaus (p. 157), the stage of social order, is to be sought for rather on one of the islands of Greece—that most remarkable island which we now know only in its separate fragments, Santorin (Thēra), Therasia, and Aspronisi. The reader will recollect the visit we lately paid to the scene (p. 46), the large half-moon-shaped Thēra with its stupendous volcanic walls on the east, the two smaller islands on the west, between them the oval gulf, whose waters of unknown depth cover the mighty crater which once towered above the centre of the *one* island now scattered into three. By the falling in of the crater which hollowed out the gulf, the whole population of the land left unsubmerged was buried beneath the lava streams. The existence of this "prehistoric Pompeii," however, was not suspected until brought to light by a curious accident. During the construction of the Suez Canal and Port Said, pozzolana, a volcanic product, which, powdered and mixed with lime, makes a most durable and water-proof cement, was in great request. It abounds in Santorin and Therasia, and the extension of the quarries on the latter island it was, that first led to the discovery in 1867 of the buried village. The work was stopped by great blocks of stone, which were afterwards found to form part of walls.<sup>1</sup> These walls, at first supposed to belong to tombs, proved to be those of dwelling-houses, provided with doors

<sup>1</sup> For the account of the discovery and the description of the "prehistoric Pompeii" we are indebted to M. Fouquet's great work *Santorin et ses Eruptions*.



and windows, and constructed of squared lava blocks, the interstices between which were filled by a reddish ash, the charred remains probably of a vegetable earth used as mortar. The objects found within were of lava, flint or terra-cotta, and as remarkable for their form as for the material of which they were made. The skeleton of a man was discovered, not extended as in a grave, but crushed together by the fall of a roof in the catastrophe which buried the village for 4000 years. Barley and other grains lay on the floor in heaps, or were stored in large jars; the bones of sheep and goats gave evidence of domesticated animals. Not a vestige of metal was to be seen, not a trace even of nails in the woodwork.

The investigations subsequently pursued on the sister-island of Thēra gave similar results, except that here the houses were found to differ in the standard of refinement attained—some containing objects of luxury, and their walls being adorned by frescoes, whilst others held only coarse articles, and their walls remained in native roughness. In Thēra were discovered, let us note, a saw of very pure copper and two little rings of equally pure gold, which had evidently formed part of a necklace. Of the domestic utensils, the coarser implements are of lava, the finer of obsidian, stone being employed for all purposes in which we now use iron. These stone tools are not polished, but most delicately wrought, the workmanship being as careful as that of the objects of the same kind so common in Mexico, where they were made even at the epoch of the Spanish Conquest. Judged by the pottery standard, the civilisation of these prehistoric dwellers on Thēra must be rated as relatively high. The vases made by the wheel are, mostly, remarkable for beauty of form; some, indeed, may already be classed as works of art. The colours are lively, and the decoration, which consists of geometrical lines, figures of animals and leaves and flowers, shows an extraordinary delicacy and refinement.<sup>1</sup>

The primitive people who had made these advances were poor fishermen. From the evidence of the appliances found in their dwellings—oil-presses of lava, disks of lava resembling the weights used by weavers for stretching their work upon the frame, &c.—it is evident that they were not behind in other arts.

These humble, prehistoric folk, labourers and fishers, knew, according to M. Fouque, how to extract oil from the olive; they cultivated the cereals, and ground them into flour; reared flocks of goats and sheep, and (judging from a pasty substance found) made cheese; they fished with nets, lived in comfortable dwellings, manufactured cloth, and knew how to surround themselves with objects pleasing to the eye.

The catastrophe which overwhelmed the island is supposed, on geological evidence, to have occurred about or before 2000 B.C. Even if, on other grounds, we place it somewhat later, and regard the vases of Thēra as belonging to 1800 B.C., the result is striking and satisfactory. We find evidence that man is no longer merely a "cooking" and a "provident" animal, but something very different. Not only does the cultivation of the olive prove that he had reached the stage of law and social order, but we have also testimony to the springing up of the germ latent in him from the very first—the "necessity" impelling him onward to beautify and adorn life.

In this connection we shall, perhaps, be justified also in assigning to this third period the primitive musical instruments found at Mycenæ—the lyre of bone, and the flute constructed of bone, terra-cotta, and stone. Not only the

<sup>1</sup> " . . . et d'une finesse de goût extraordinaire sont surtout fournies par l'endroit couvert de peintures et par les poteries."

eye, but the ear, had already begun to strive after harmony—through both the ideal is already claiming its place above the material.

Whether the dwellers on Thēra were of Greek or Carian extraction, is a problem which we must be content to leave unsolved. We call the reader's attention, however, to one point, which, like the glass bead found at Tiryns, excites our curiosity, viz. the existence on the island of metal articles—the bronze saw and the gold rings. How is their presence among the articles of stone—of obsidian, flint, and lava to be accounted for?

*Fourth Stage.* The fourth and final stage of prehistoric culture—personified in the sagas of Argos under the names of Atreus and Agamemnon—presents us with a striking contrast, at once brilliant and extraordinary, to all that has gone before. In place of the rude dwellings of tillers of the soil, we have before our eyes the palaces and tombs, alike richly decorated, of powerful princes; in place of groups of trembling shepherds climbing to the heights of lofty rocks, or hiding in underground holes for safety, we have armed warriors, strong citadels, and fortified enclosures surrounded by walls that have withstood the storms of the ages, side by side with the simple vessels and implements of homely peasant life; objects not only dazzling but luxurious and artistic meet our gaze—insignia of royalty, the jewels and ornaments of princesses, the gold-bedecked weapons and mighty golden goblets of heroes—all wrought with the finished technique that marks an advanced stage of culture.

Most of these wonders culminate and find their fullest presentment in Argos, and especially in Mycenæ, but the civilisation which they typify was by no means confined to Argos. All along the eastern coast of Greece—from the valley of the Eurotas, the traditional home of the Achæans of Peloponnesus, to Iolcus (Volo) in Thessaly, the traditional home of the Minyæ—it has left indisputable traces of its existence.

The Mycenæ rich in gold, the wealthy Orchomenus with its revenue comparable to that of the hundred-gated Egyptian Thebes of the *Iliad*, are proved to have been at one period strictly deserving of the epithets bestowed upon them and lasting factors in the making of Hellas. It is the Mycenæan culture, modified by circumstances shortly to be detailed, which we see in Homer.

Let us, then, begin our survey of the "Mycenæan" civilisation with the city, which, from the variety and fulness of its monuments, has given its name to the epoch.

## MYCENÆ

Making our way now from the Isthmus and Corinth by the pass through Mount Tretus, in which the roads from Nemea and Cleonæ meet, we enter the very narrow northern corner of the Plain of Argos, and there, to our left, on a spur projecting from Tretus towards the west, we see the stately and, after more than 2000 years of desolation, still imposing ruins of Mycenæ, the "well-built," "wide-wayed," "rich-in-gold" city of the *Iliad*, the dark old fortress described for us so picturesquely by Dean Stanley.

The main object of this citadel in the farthest "nook of horse-pasturing Argos" would seem to have been to dominate, not merely the upper part of the plain, but the roads leading to the north—to Phlius and Sicyōn, Nemea, Cleonæ, and, above all, Corinth—through the pass which we have just quitted. The power that had command of these mountain passes and roads had access also to three great gulfs, the Corinthian, Saronic, and Argolic, with all the commercial advantages belonging thereto.



That this sea-empire was the object aimed at by the builders of the old fortress has been made tolerably clear by Captain Steffen, who has demonstrated the existence of an ancient Cyclopean highway, narrow and protected by towers, which led by three arms to Corinth, and whose *raison d'être* was evidently the keeping open of the communication between that city and Mycenæ. Whether the latter was founded by invaders from Corinth, determined to gain the Argolic Plain and Gulf, as Steffen and Busolt think, or by some powerful Argive prince, bent on forcing his way to the Western Sea and the Islands, as held by Schuchhardt, really matters little. The connection itself, however, in whatever way accomplished, is a point of importance inasmuch as the command of a double or triple sea serves to explain the power and pre-eminence of Agamemnon, "King of men," and the wealth of Mycenæ, better than does the reason assigned by Thucydides, viz. the fertility of the lands about the city.

Mycenæ, according to the latest researches, consisted of three parts: the Acropolis or higher city, the lower city, and a suburb to the west.

The Acropolis was, of course, the rocky height projecting from the mountain behind Tretus. It lies between two majestic peaks of Mount Eubœa—one on the north, 2500 feet high, the other on the south-east, and is defended naturally by two deep glens or gorges—one on the north, the other the bed of a torrent, protecting the whole southern exposure. The rock presents the shape of an irregular triangle, with the apex towards the east, whilst the base, beneath which stretched the lower city, faces the west.

The east and west sides of the cliff slope to the plain in a succession of terraces, natural or artificial.

**The Walls.**—On the Acropolis lay the palace of the chieftain, defended by strong circuit-walls, which follow the winding edge of the rock, and are preserved on all sides except the south, where probably the natural defence afforded by the precipitous fall of the rock to the gorge below may have rendered protection by art unnecessary. These walls, constructed of hard limestone quarried from the neighbouring mountains, are from thirteen to thirty-five feet high, and on an average sixteen feet thick. They exhibit no less than three different styles of architecture, belonging to various periods. The workmanship of the nucleus (and by far the greater part) resembles that of Tiryns, although not so massive, consisting of roughly shaped blocks piled on one another and bonded together by small stones and clay. Then we have polygonal blocks, fitted together with great skill, and, lastly, quadrangular blocks in regular layers. In the north wall are the remains of a gallery, probably constructed on the same plan as those at Tiryns, shortly to be described. The fortifications included several towers.

On the west is the chief entrance to the fortress, the famous Lion Gate, and a smaller door or postern gave admittance on the north-east. The approach to the former was so planned that a narrow passage between the wall and a tower had first to be traversed. Hence, an enemy must have met with a warm reception on either side before he could effect an entrance. Over the gateway is a triangular gap formed by the gradual approximation of the two side-layers of stone. This space is filled by a slab sculptured in relief with the device from which the gate takes its name—two lions, one on either side, standing on their long outstretched hindlegs, and resting their forepaws on an altar placed between them; on the altar stands a column. The meaning and probable origin of these symbols will engage our attention shortly.

**The Lower City and Suburb.**—Between the two glens mentioned, and stretching to the south-west, lay the lower city, where cluster the people

round the height on which dwelt their liege lord. The lower city appears to have been, like the citadel, strongly fortified, but the bounds evidently became too strait for an increasing population. The walls of the old town may still be traced; beyond them lies what must have been a vast and well-built suburb. It is to this Lower Mycenæ, probably, that the Homeric epithet "wide-wayed" applies. The lower city presents many objects of interest—cyclopean sub-structures of houses, remains of a cyclopean bridge, and—most remarkable of all—no fewer than seven of the wondrous underground dome-shaped sepulchres, called generally from their form "beehive" tombs, and for the same reason by the country-folk around *phournoi* = ovens. Two of these are found within the walls of the old town, five beyond them.

So little was the purpose for which these underground buildings were designed understood, that until very recently the name popularly given to the largest and most important of them, the "Treasury of Atreus," was regarded by many archaeologists as correctly expressing their object, viz. the concealment of the royal treasures. There can be no doubt, however, that these wonderful buildings, modelled apparently as we have seen (p. 126) upon the abodes of the living, were the abodes of the dead. For the bee-hive tomb at Menidi in Attica, recently discovered, contained the remains of six persons. Let us for a moment glance at the "Treasury of Atreus," premising that the treasures found in the pit-graves of Mycenæ, shortly to be described, sufficiently explain why wealth should have been traditionally associated also with the beehive tombs not only of Mycenæ but of Orchomenus.

The Treasury of Atreus, the only complete prehistoric building of Greece, lies about 400 yards to the south of the Lion Gate, within the walls of the old town. It consists of three parts: (1) a *dromos* or approach; (2) a large dome-shaped chamber; and (3) a smaller square side-chamber cut out in the slope of a ridge, which crosses the lower city, and beneath which the Treasury is built.

Entering the *dromos* (which is laid out in the form of a trench, but flanked by supporting walls) the first object that arrests the attention is the doorway, eighteen feet high, over which are two stupendous slabs, one of which is supposed to weigh from 130 to 135 tons. Let the reader conjecture, if he can, how this enormous block was quarried, transported, and raised to its present position. The entrance is further adorned by half-columns of peculiar shape. The building itself consists of concentric layers of stones, placed horizontally on one another and gradually narrowing as they ascend until the top is closed by a single slab.

Within, the stones are smooth and polished, but outside they are rough, and covered by great masses of smaller stones and earth, which serve to keep the circular layers of masonry in position.

The "beehive" thus reared, fifty feet in height and fifty in diameter, produces an impression of combined strength, simplicity, and unity, for there is no separation visible between walls and roof.

From the third row upwards, holes, in which the remains of bronze nails have been found, are bored in the stones. The object of the nails was for long supposed to be the fastening to the walls of polished metal plates, thus making of the subterranean tomb a veritable brazen house, like that which, in the myth, the suspicious Acrisius builds underground, and wherein he hides his daughter Danaë, the mother of the hero Perseus.

That such a mode of decoration, the clothing of the walls with shining metal, suits the Homeric description of the palace of King Alcinous with its threshold of bronze and its brazen walls, its halls with gleam, as it were, of sun or moon, is evident; but that it was used in the "Treasury of Atreus" is doubtful.



Dörpfeld is of opinion, rather, that the position of the nails points to ornaments in the shape of bronze rosettes so arranged as to form a definite pattern, after the same style as the decorations of the "Treasury of Minyas" at Orchomenus. The door, however, was probably clothed with metal or marble slabs. The large hall may have been used for funeral and sacrificial rites, but the small side-chamber evidently represents the tomb, properly so-called.

As we turn away from the "Treasury" of Atreus—rightly characterised by Adeler as the "climax" of prehistoric architectural skill—the question rises involuntarily to our lips: "How many 'experiments' had to be gone through, how many failures surmounted, before the primitive earth-and-brushwood hiding-places (*pholoi*) of the Aryan herdsman took shape in stone and reached so amazing a 'climax'?"

## THE PIT-GRAVES OF MYCENÆ

Now that we are familiar with the city of Mycenæ, and such of its monuments as have been known to travellers for centuries, let us follow Dr. Schliemann in those explorations which have brought before us the rulers and probable builders of the old citadel, its walls and its tombs.

**The "Pit-Graves" of Mycenæ.**—Closely linked to Schliemann's enthusiasm for "Troy," there must have been in the man, as we can easily see, an equal love for Mycenæ. Given the truth of the existence of that Troy in which, and its fate, he so firmly believed, the existence of Agamemnon, and his association with Mycenæ, must be granted too. Tradition says that, on his return as victor from the ten years' siege of Troy, Agamemnon had been treacherously murdered by his consort, Clytæmnestra, according to the *Odyssey*, as he sat at the banquet of welcome; according to another version of the story followed by Æschylus and Euripides, in the bath, before he had broken bread in his own halls. Tradition said also that the "King of men," together with his immediate followers and the captive prophetess Cassandra, daughter of Priam, who had all likewise been done to death by Clytæmnestra, lay buried at Mycenæ, where their tombs (or the place where they were supposed to exist) were pointed out to Pausanias. From the account of the latter, most modern travellers—Leake, Dodwell, O. Muller, and E. Curtius—imagined these royal tombs to have lain in the lower city. Not so Dr. Schliemann. By a happy inspiration, or a lucky instinct, whichever we choose to call it, he took Pausanias' meaning to be that the royal tombs were in the higher city, on the fortress height. And there, in the summer of 1876, while debarred from pursuing his investigations in the Troad by the interminable delays of the Turkish Government, he resolved to seek for them.

To his now practised eye the south exposure of the fortress-hill to the right of the Lion Gate appeared, from the greater depth of the accumulations on its surface, the most likely spot whereon to commence operations. Nor was the "spoilt child of fortune" deceived. First there came to light several stela or tombstones, sculptured and unsculptured, and next was laid bare a low ring-wall, enclosing a circular space, and consisting of a double row of upright slabs joined together and covered by cross-slabs fitted in so as to form (apparently) a sort of stone bench. Schliemann's first conjecture was that in the circular space and surrounding benches he had unearthed the old Agora or Assembly-place of Mycenæ, but a foot-measure very prosaically dispelled the illusion, the wall is much too high to have been intended for the purpose of seating the worthy burghers of Mycenæ. Its object, however, was soon defined,

for within its enclosing ring, beneath the tombstones and some twenty-five feet below the soil, were found, cut in the rock, the royal tombs of Mycenæ, five in number. To these a sixth, afterwards discovered (also on the southern side of the citadel) by M. Stamatahis, the Commissary appointed by the Greek Government, has since been added.

Imagine the thrill that must have passed through the mind of the man with "faith in an idea," when he suddenly found himself face to face with the supposed objects of his search—three human skeletons laid on beds of pebbles and covered with all the outward tokens of royalty, for on each lay a golden diadem, and eight golden plates representing the appearance of half diadems, and five golden ornaments in the shape of crosses formed of laurel leaves.<sup>1</sup> Imagine, further, what amazing confirmation the idea must have received on entering the next tomb,<sup>2</sup> for here again lay three bodies, this time "literally laden with jewels." On the head of one was a splendid golden crown, described by the discoverer as covered with shield-like ornaments which, being in repoussé work, protrudes, giving to the crown an indescribably magnificent aspect, still further augmented by thirty-six large leaves attached.

On the head of another was a second diadem, less magnificent, but beautifully wrought with rosettes, also in repoussé work. Moreover, corresponding precisely in ornamentation with the two diadems, were found again the mysterious half-oval gold plates taken by Schliemann for the halves of diadems, but now supposed to be supplementary ornaments, worn on the breast or suspended from the girdle point downwards, and forming with the crown to which they correspond, the *parure* of the princesses of Mycenæ. That the occupants of these two graves were women is thought to be proved by the smallness of the bones and teeth, and the feminine nature of the surroundings. These comprised an immense number of thick, round gold plates, about the size of the palm of the hand, decorated in fine repoussé work with the most varied devices, the sepia (octopus or cuttlefish) with head and eyes visible and its eight arms continued into spirals, a flower, a beautiful butterfly, leaf-patterns, star-flowered, and splendid spiral ornamentations. These plates are supposed to have been fastened on the robe of the wearer by means of glue, so that a Mycenæan lady *en grande toilette* must literally have shone and glittered from head to foot with gold. Nor was this all: there are massive ornaments, also of gold, evidently belonging to necklaces, to which purpose the quantity of amber beads found was probably also applied, more crosses of laurel leaves, golden "hair-holders" and bracelets, and gems of amethyst and sardonyx engraved in intaglio with figures of men and animals, exhibiting a skill which is perfectly marvellous and makes the beholder wonder how such minute details could possibly have been executed without the aid of magnifying glasses. To describe all the wonders of this third tomb, the golden ornaments representing butterflies (as symbol of immortality?), grasshoppers (symbol of autochthony?),

<sup>1</sup> Tomb I., according to the computation adopted in the museum at Athens, where the Mycenæan treasures now lie. This arrangement differs from that given by Schliemann, who reckons as I. the tomb first discovered, but the excavation of which, owing to difficulties in the working, had to be deferred, and was examined last. The relative numbers are as under:—

Museum No.	I. = Schliemann's	II.
"	II. =	V.
"	III. =	III.
"	IV. =	IV.
"	V. =	I.
"	VI. =	VI.

III., IV., and VI. are thus the same in both.

<sup>2</sup> No III. on both methods.



griffins (symbol of fidelity?), the sphinxes (symbol of wisdom?) would occupy too much of our space. The reader will find them all described, and many illustrated, in Dr. Schliemann's work. There are, however, certain objects which cannot be passed over so lightly, and which, although merely mentioned here, we shall have occasion to refer to again. These objects, also of gold, are: (1) Two female figures of the same type, one with a flying dove on her hand, the other with a dove on either arm; (2) the model of a little temple with a dove at each corner; (3) two other figures of a different type, representing a woman seated and with the arms crossed on the breast; (4) two pairs of little golden scales, evidently never intended for any practical purpose.

*The First and Third Graves* (Schliemann's *Second and Third*), then, are, we may presume, the tombs of the princesses of Mycenæ, but let us note that the objects in the third are much richer than those in the first. From this it is argued that both graves do not belong to the same period.

*The Fourth Grave.*—It is, however, in the fourth grave that the interest culminates. Its importance is already signalled by the fact that directly over it, within the ring-wall before described (p. 167), was found a round Cyclopean altar, buried like the tombstones and the grave-circle by the accumulations of the ages. Its position denoted that those who lay beneath were worthy of special honour. The grave is a large one, 24 ft. in length by 18½ in breadth. In it were five bodies, again "literally smothered in jewels." The occupants are supposed to have been three men and two women. The remains of the latter were adorned with diadems and ornaments of the same kind as those already described. In connection with these, therefore, we need only say that, in addition, the funeral furniture of the ladies of the castle included also their "household gods" in the shape of thirty-four copper vessels and cauldrons for heating water, &c., some of which had seen service, some were unused.

Passing now to the equipment of their lords, we come to objects of exceeding interest in every way, for the face of each was covered by a mask of thick gold-plate. These masks, in rough repoussé work, are not (like the wooden masks found in Egyptian tombs) all of one ideal type, but evidently portraits, the first efforts to depict the human face divine, for each one presents us unmistakably with a different physiognomy, therefore presumably a likeness. A fourth mask, depicting a lion's head, is evidently the device upon a shield, the framework of which has mouldered away. Each body, again, was covered with a golden breastplate, and accompanied to its last resting-place by what its tenant had valued most on earth, his weapons of offence and defence. On the ground in a heap lay arrow-points of stone, the hard obsidian articles of wonderful interest, as attesting the age in which their owner had lived. Beside them, and presenting the most striking contrast, were twenty bronze swords and many lances. The sheaths had evidently been of wood, ornamented on either side by elaborate golden bosses or buttons in intaglio work, which lay around literally in hundreds.

By far the greatest wonders of the whole Mycenæan collection, however, are the following:—

1. A sceptre (or augur's staff) in gold and rock crystal, which, as described by its discoverer, must "have been of marvellous beauty." It consists of a golden cylinder formed of four-leaved flowers, each leaf encrusted with a piece of rock-crystal, and splendid golden handle representing a dragon and terminating at both sides in a dragon's head, the scales on the dragon's body and its eyes being likewise represented by pieces of rock-crystal. These little mosaics, be it noted, are so delicately cut and fitted into the hollows prepared for them, that, although cylinder and handle have come apart, only one piece

of crystal has as yet fallen out. We can, indeed, believe with Schliemann, that had Homer beheld this treasure, he would have characterised it as "a wonder to look upon."

2. However, if Homer had apparently never seen anything of this kind, with the next class of marvels he would have been perfectly at home—the golden goblets. The wondrous goodly cup embossed with studs of gold—with its four handles, on each two feeding doves—which old Nestor had brought from home, and which was so heavy that another man could scarce have lifted it, finds its parallels here, for one of the Mycenæan goblets weighs 4 lbs., and is embossed with magnificent rosettes of gold; whilst on the handles of another sit two doves, peering down into the goblet below, as though they too fain would "feed." A third goblet of silver is exceedingly interesting from its decorations, which are in the inlaid work shortly to be described, and represent—note!—the lotus plant.

3. Next we have an ox-head of silver, with horns of gold and a rosette on its forehead, depicted with a fidelity to nature and a freedom so astounding that a celebrated archæologist (*Stephani*) did not hesitate on the first discovery of the treasures to ascribe it to the Greeks of the third century B.C.

We ask the reader's attention also to the fact that this grave contained no fewer than fifty-six smaller ox-heads, with a double-axe between the horns—a symbol, the meaning of which we shall discuss shortly.

4. We have, fourthly, a large alabaster vase, in Schuchhardt's opinion the most remarkable of the whole collection, inasmuch as, although in style Mycenæan (*i.e.* over 3000 years old), "from its form and technique it might have come directly from any modern salon."

5. Lastly, come objects which yield in interest to nothing previously mentioned, the inlaid bronze daggers. These were discovered, indeed, by Schliemann, but neither he nor any one else suspected their true importance until this suddenly came to light in the museum at Athens during the process of cleaning. When the oxide layer, which had formed on them through the centuries, was removed, there suddenly stood revealed pictures in colours, ingeniously formed of the most diverse metals. One dagger represents a great lion-hunt—on the left are five men, on the right three lions, depicted with the utmost life and vigour. The first lion is rushing fiercely on his opponents; the second has taken to flight, but looks back warily to see how his comrade is faring; the third evidently thinks the situation hopeless, for he is careering away as fast as his legs will carry him. The lions and nude parts of the hunters are in gold, the garments and shields in silver; other parts of the picture, such as the shield rims, are in black. Not content with one elaborate scene, the reverse side of the dagger gives another, in which a lion is pursuing five gazelle-like creatures, and has just caught the last.

We mention in this connection another extraordinary inlaid dagger found in the fifth tomb. Here cat-like animals (panthers?) are chasing ducks in a swamp; stealthily they creep along, whilst the ducks try, half flying, to escape; below are fish, and—note again!—papyrus reeds. The animals, plants, and bodies of the ducks are of gold; the wings of the ducks and the river of silver; the fish are of a darker metal; and on the neck of one of the ducks is even a red drop as of blood!! Who shall say, after this, that the shield of Achilles, with its herds harried by lions, its siege and battle, and wounded red with blood, its pastoral and vintage scenes, its black grapes on silver poles, is the mere outcome of the poet's imagination? Homer must have been familiar with specimens of inlaid metal-work very similar to that on the daggers of Mycenæ.



*The Second Grave* (Schliemann's *Fifth*) need not detain us long. It is the smallest of all, and contained but one body, on the skull of which was the narrow golden circlet worn by men as a diadem. When found in halves, these circlets are supposed to be armlets (from the fact that one was discovered in position wrapped around the arm bones), anklets, or worn round the knee, ornaments peculiar to men.

*The Fifth Grave* (Schliemann's *First*), to which we now pass on, presented evidence yet more striking of the honour and care bestowed by these dwellers in the night of time upon their dead. If the first and third graves had yielded up the ornaments of their silent tenants, if the fourth grave gave us the portraits of the departed, the fifth grave held within it a sight more significant still. The grave was occupied by three bodies, evidently—from the accompaniment of masks, breastplates, swords, and daggers—those of men. On removing the ponderous mask of one, the face was seen “with all the flesh wonderfully preserved,” both eyes were perfectly visible, and the mouth had its quota of thirty-two perfect teeth. The preservation of the flesh for a period of 3000 years can have but one explanation—the body had been embalmed—a circumstance to which we shall have occasion to refer again.

Another curious fact about this third body is that, although of large proportions, it was found “forcibly squeezed” into a very small space, so that the head was pressed down upon the chest. Can we doubt what meaning lay in this simple fact of the “squeezing,” as seen by the eyes of the heroic explorer? Here, undoubtedly, must be the key to the whole mystery—Agamemnon foully murdered and thrust into a dishonoured grave—reparation made in the golden surroundings by the filial piety of Orestes. Pity that a solution so dramatic and so entirely in accordance with the “ought to be” of sentiment, should be, if not entirely dissipated, yet left altogether unconfirmed!

The Agamemnon hypothesis requires that all the bodies should have been buried at one time, and in haste; and this at first was favoured by the notion that no entrance to the royal graves existed—that the bodies, therefore, had all been deposited at one time, and the openings blocked up. Further examination, however, of the graves themselves has led Dr. Dörpfeld and others to the following conclusions: (1) that the graves were not blocked up, but provided with slabs removable when necessary; (2) that the “squeezing” and compression of the body is attributable to the falling-in of the ceiling of the tomb; (3) that so far from the bodies having all been deposited at the same time, the difference in the technique of the objects contained proves the reverse, Graves I., III., and IV. giving evidence of far greater wealth and luxury than II., V., and VI. The last, discovered by Stamatahis a year later, is very simple; it contained the remains of two persons, doubtless men, who were adorned with neither mask, breastplate, nor armlet.

However, if we are thus restrained from giving too definite a form to our picture, no one can deny that the picture exists, call it by what name we will. Clytæmnestra and her accomplice, Ægisthus, overawing the simple peasants of Mycenæ in regal pomp—she in the magnificent *parure*, the crown of golden leaves with the girdle hangings, the robe of Tyrian purple bestrewn, bestarred, bespangled with gold; he in the shining cuirass and diadem, the slim golden armlets, anklets, kneelets, with the sharp bronze sword in its glittering sheath, and the dagger worth a petty chieftain's ransom by his side—these are very real and understandable figures as they walk through the rôle assigned them by tradition.

Compared to the wealth revealed by the “pit-graves” of Mycenæ, the

Homeric "luxury" is simplicity itself, a fact which has doubtless already suggested to the reader the question: How, then, can we be certain that the civilisation of Mycenæ is either prehistoric or pre-Homeric?

The answer to this question is both positive and negative.

(1) *The Negative answer* is furnished by two facts:—

(a) The Mycenæan pit-graves contained no iron.

(b) They have yielded no *fibulæ* (the "safety-pins" of antiquity), objects hitherto found in well-nigh every deposit on classical soil.

Homer is acquainted with iron; and *fibulæ* (*peronæ*) are both in *Iliad* and *Odyssey* the customary dress-fasteners.

(2) *The Positive answer* is furnished by the large number of obsidian arrows found (p. 169). No argument could be proved in this way by the presence of a single stone arrow, inasmuch as this might have been kept as a relic or an amulet. But stone arrows in heaps are held to be conclusive, as pointing to their still general use by the people.

Homer, on the other hand, knows only bronze arrow-points.

Hence, on both sides, positive and negative, the evidence warrants our regarding the pit-graves of Mycenæ as both prehistoric and pre-Homeric.<sup>1</sup>

*The ancient Palace* on the top of the citadel-rock, excavated by the Greek Archæological Society in 1886, exhibits the same ground-plan as those of Hissarlik and Tiryns. From the style of the pottery found, and of the mural decorations (which are very curious, and will be described in a later section), the palace dates from a period a little later than that of the pit-graves. To this later period belong also the beehive tombs, the "climax" of prehistoric architecture.

## TIRYNS

Leaving now the extreme north of the Plain of Argos and Mycenæ, the fortress designed to protect the passes to Corinth, we turn our steps in the opposite direction, and, crossing the Inachus, arrive at the fortress designed to protect the extreme south against invasion from the sea, Tiryns. The reader will doubtless recollect that here we found the prehistoric remains of the first stage of civilisation on Greek soil. Those illustrating the last are full of interest.

The rock of Tiryns—about 900 feet in length by 200–250 in breadth—is, as we know, the lowest of the "island" heights in the plain, rising above the sea-level to a height of from 30 to 50 feet only. Hence strength in the fortifications became here an object of more special importance even than at Mycenæ, with its greater height and its protecting gorges. And strength, the object aimed at, the old builders of Tiryns certainly attained. The circuit walls, which follow the edge of the rock, are built of limestone blocks banded together by a strong clay mortar, and so colossal in size that—as in the case of the stupendous slabs roofing the doorway of the Treasury of Atreus (p. 158)—we are filled with amazement and curiosity as to the way in which the transporting and the placing of them *in situ* could possibly have been accomplished. From measurements made by Professor Adeler, a weight of from 12,000 to 13,000 kgms. is obtained for a single block, "the transport of which to its exact place on a high and narrow site is only possible with the aid of many technical devices—inclined planes and scaffolding—and a host of workmen."

<sup>1</sup> "All investigators are agreed that these objects are pre-Homeric." (Helbig, *Das Homerische Epos*, p. 50.)



From the immense size and weight of the stones employed, the walls of Tiryns are a monument of human ingenuity, equal in importance to the Pyramids of Egypt. To these factors they owe their preservation, since the local would-be depredators found it easier to quarry for themselves than to attempt the removal of the material quarried ages before.

Let us imagine then these stupendous walls, from 25 to 50 feet thick, rising around the low rock of Tiryns to a height probably of some 60 feet, and defended by towers at intervals, and we shall be able to measure the change which has taken place in the idea of "security" since the days when our Aryans burrowed for safety in the bosom of Mother Earth.

It is not, however, the size and weight of the stones, or the majestic proportions of the walls alone that excite our astonishment. Other factors besides strength had their place in the plans of these ancient builders, for the explorations made in 1885 by Dr. Dörpfeld have proved that the walls on the southern and eastern sides of the Upper Citadel surrounding the palace are not solid, but contained passages or corridors, connected with the palace by staircases, and opening on to a series of vaulted fire-proof chambers, which probably served as store-rooms and magazines—doubtless also, on occasion, as dungeons. To this arrangement of chambers in the walls we shall refer again, only calling the reader's attention meantime to the whole system as an astounding example of prehistoric fortification.<sup>1</sup>

The space within the circuit walls comprises (a) the highest part (on the south), the site of the palace; (b) a middle section, connected with the first by a narrow staircase, and probably occupied by retainers; and (c) a lower part on the north, probably serving as a place of refuge for the populace from the plain in time of war.

Round the old palace itself has waged a fierce war of words—some authorities denying its prehistoric character, others again as stoutly maintaining it. There can be no doubt that the latter party has won the day. The palace at Tiryns may not agree in all details with the palace of Odysseus, as described by Homer, but there can be no question as to its age—it belongs unmistakably to the later Mycenaean period, the period terminated, as we shall presently see, by the Dorian invasion.

The ground plan of the palace can be clearly traced, for its walls, from half a metre to one metre in height, are still standing, "numerous bases of pillars are still in their place, and in the doorways still lie the huge stone thresholds."

The walls of the palace were adorned by paintings, and in the Men's Hall was discovered a magnificent alabaster frieze, with decorations of rosettes and half-rosettes, and a spiral border in the Mycenaean style. The central points of the rosettes and the border were of another material—probably smalt—(a beautiful blue glassy substance, found also in beads and ornaments at Mycenæ). The contrast between the reliefs in white alabaster and the inlaid brilliant blue smalt must have been highly effective.

There are other places and objects of great interest in prehistoric Greece; but not to weary the reader with archæological details, we shall ask his attention briefly to two points only:

1. At Nauplia, the seaport of Argos, there exist sepulchres of a type differing both from the pit-graves and the beehive tombs. They are chambers hewn in the rock of the citadel hill, and approached by a narrow passage. At Sparta also, on the eastern slope of Hymettus in Attica, similar graves,

<sup>1</sup> The best and clearest description of the wall of Tiryns is that given by Schuchhardt, to which we refer the reader.

three rock chambers united by passages, have been found. The contents of both are similar in style, though inferior in richness to those of the pit-graves at Mycenæ.

2. Beehive tombs of the same type as those of Mycenæ exist near the Heraeum on Mount Eubœa (the eighth of these buildings in Argos)—at Pharis, near Sparta, at Menidi in Attica, at Volo (Iolcus) in Thessaly, and at Orchomenus in Bœotia, giving a total of twelve as yet discovered in Greece. The two last, from their presence in or near the two chief cities of the Minyæ, have a special interest for us, and our expectation is in no way disappointed, for the "Treasury of Minyas," the heroic ancestor of the Little Folk, may indeed be described in the words of Pausanias as "a wonder inferior to nothing in Greece or elsewhere." It consists, like the Treasury of Atreus, of *dromos* (approach), "beehive" hall, and side-chamber. The great hall, which was decorated with metal rosettes, arranged on a five-star system, has long been partly demolished; but the side-chamber (or tomb proper) contains a treasure indeed in the shape of a ceiling, most exquisitely sculptured in the greyish marble of the Bœotian mountains, with rosettes, palm-leaves, and spirals, again reminding us of Mycenæ and Tiryns. The elegance of the design and the delicacy of the workmanship are such as to render this ceiling a real work of art.

Gathering up now the results of our investigation, we find that if the pit-graves have yielded objects giving evidence of great wealth and a high degree of artistic finish, the structures in existence demonstrate that a skill in building in stone, acquired only after long practice, had been reached in three styles of architecture—in fortresses, palaces, and vaulted tombs. Again the question arises, How can we be certain that these buildings are prehistoric? And again the answer is twofold.

(1) *The Negative Answer* points to the absence of any similar buildings in historic Greece. Nothing like the beehive tombs or the walls of Tiryns was so much as attempted in later times,<sup>1</sup> and the Greeks of history were, as we know, as much puzzled to account for the presence of these monuments in their midst as though they had suddenly been deposited *in situ* by the magic of Aladdin's lamp.

(2) *The Positive Argument* is supplied by the facts that the pottery and other objects found in the tombs and palaces, and the mural decorations correspond so closely in style to the "finds" of the pit-graves, as to stamp the whole (although, as stated, the latter belong to an earlier stage of that whole) with one unmistakable impress—the pit-graves and the buildings mentioned, from Laconia to Thessaly, alike represent that stage of prehistoric culture known as the MYCENÆAN EPOCH.

There only remains for us now to find out (if we can!) how the wide gulf separating "Danaus" from "Atreus" and "Agamemnon"—the chieftain clad in skins from the warrior cased in bronze—was bridged over.

## INFLUENCE OF THE EAST ON EARLY GREECE

We have seen that the legends and myths of Greece traced back the great buildings of Argos and the invention of metal-working to certain beings endowed with supernatural powers, wheel-eyed Cyclopes and magic-working Dactyls and Telchines, who, it was believed, had come from the East (p. 160).

<sup>1</sup> The beehive tombs have hitherto been found only on Greek soil; Asia Minor has yielded none; Italy only late copies derived from the old Greek models.



Judging even from the geographical bearings of the case, these traditions, as we have hinted, evidently contain a kernel of truth. For not only is the face of Greece, and of Argos in particular, turned towards the East, but between the East and Greece lie the many islands which form a whole series of connecting links or bridges. To find that the earliest recollections of the Greeks point to the East is, therefore, perfectly natural, and just what we have reason to expect.

There is, however, a certain class of persons, rabid Philo-Hellenes, who, even at the present day, will say, "Well, and what of that? Granted that there was very early intercourse between Greece and Asia, how could such intercourse have had any real bearing, any real influence, upon the making of Hellas?"

To answer this question effectually, we must take a brief—a very brief—glance at the founders of the most ancient civilisations of the world. Only in this way can we find out for ourselves whether they had anything of value to offer to the Greeks or not. An ounce of fact is worth a ton of conjecture.

**Egypt.**—The facts concerning the civilisation of Egypt, the oldest of all civilisations, are supplied by that wonderful world of the dead, the tombs of the valley of the Nile. The most ancient of these, the graves of the old inhabitants of Memphis, gather round the three great Pyramids at Ghizeh, near Cairo; whilst those of a younger generation lie at Saqqara, some three hours by road to the south. Amongst the latter, near the serapeum discovered by Mariette, is the grave of a distinguished Egyptian called Ti.<sup>1</sup> This grave, some six thousand years old, is adorned by pictures, in colours as vivid as though they had proceeded but yesterday from the hand of the painter, and accompanied by naive explanations of their purport in hieroglyphics. It is as though the arts of the painter and the scribe had combined to leave no possible doubt in the mind of any future generation as to the state of things in Egypt in the lifetime of the man in whose honour the tomb was adorned. The titles of Ti reveal the fact that even at this period there were ministers of war, privy councillors, lord chamberlains, and other grandees and functionaries of state. The pictures show us the wealth of the great Ti, and the extent of his demesne; scribes are noting down the numbers of his flocks and herds—cows, goats, geese, ducks, and pigeons, antelopes and gazelles pass in review before us; we see his servants busied in their various callings, feeding the animals, milking the cows and rescuing them during the rising of the Nile; we see the various agricultural processes—the ploughing with oxen, the sowing and planting, the reaping of the grain, the tying of it into bundles, the primitive mode of thrashing by the ox and the ass. Other slaves are occupied as rowers in great ships, or in domestic duties—butchers are slaughtering, the baker is kneading and baking, the cook is busy, and jars of wine and barley-beer stand ready for the refreshment of the mighty Ti and his household. Workmen are engaged in different trades: at the head of them stands the carpenter, and we watch him—armed with axe, saw, hammer, chisel, polishing-iron and drill—as he proceeds from the felling of a tree to the making of elegant furniture. The sculptor in stone and wood, the painter, the turner, the polisher, the tanner, the shoemaker, the potter—yea, and the glass-blower, ply their callings before our eyes. Nor in this ancient life was "all work and no play" the rule, for games of draughts have their turn. Finally, we see the great man himself enjoying quiet domestic happiness with his wife, or taking part in the bold and exciting sport of hunting the hippopotamus.

<sup>1</sup> We owe the following picturesque *résumé* in part to a lecture given by Brugsch now many years ago, *Die Ägyptische Gräberwelt*.

All this points to a prolonged period of rest and quietness, to a strong government affording the protection necessary to the development of the various arts of civilisation, and all this we find existing in Egypt some thirty centuries before our era.<sup>1</sup> The architecture and sculpture, even of the earliest Egyptian monuments, show obedience to certain fixed rules and canons of art. This alone presupposes a civilisation extending backwards for ages. Of the roots and beginnings of this civilisation there are but few traces. They are hidden in the night of Time. Nor was this civilisation fated to pass speedily away. We trace it in the much later graves of the Middle Empire in richer development. The paintings on the tombs at Beni Hassan (about 2371-2325 B.C.) exhibit the change in great fulness. Agricultural processes again pass before us in detail, as before; but we now see in use no fewer than five different kinds of plough, one of which is similar to that still employed by the fellaheen of Egypt; among the domesticated animals sheep appear beside the goats, cows, and asses; we see the process of irrigation; and the harvest, not only of grain, but of grapes, the lotus, and the vine is being gathered in. The most varied manufactures in each detail of their varied processes are being carried on—the preparers of flax, the spinners, weavers, fullers, the carpenters and joiners, potters and glass-blowers, shoemakers and barbers, smiths and goldsmiths are at work. Implements of war—bows and arrows, battle-axes, lances and javelins—are in preparation. The pleasures of the chase are entered into with the greatest zest—we see the hunt pursued by the aid of dogs and of lions, tamed for the purpose; the hunters returning with the results of their sport—gazelle, porcupine, and hare; we watch the snaring of birds, the catching of the gazelle with the noose, of the wild ox with the lasso.

Pleasures of another kind are not wanting—gymnasts, tumblers, jugglers, wrestlers all put in an appearance; games of different kinds with ball and hoop are going on, while evidence of tastes more refined is furnished not only by flutes and harps of various shapes, but by the representation of artists engaged upon a picture.

In short, if the age of the Pyramids showed us a strongly rooted civilisation, the product of centuries of growth, the age of the Middle Empire still testifies to strength, and to increased luxury and material progress. As Brugsch well observes, war and commerce have been at work; each has brought new ideas in its wake, a thousand things show that the world is broader, that man has become more many-sided, his life more complex. In agriculture and sculpture, in the manufacture of fine linen, of beautiful glass and elegant ornaments of gold, Egypt stood unrivalled. And this at a time, be it observed, when the peoples of modern Europe were either wandering from place to place, their only aim to find pasture for their herds, or hiding in forests, in dens and caves of the earth—"as hunt-ed rather than hunt-ers."

If we turn to the Semitic nations, we find the same evidence. The beginnings of the Babylonian civilisation cannot be placed later than 3000 B.C., and in its results the Semitic culture rivalled the Egyptian. The Babylonians developed independently the arts of architecture and sculpture, and also of irrigation; in various industries they were pre-eminent—in ornamental weaving, in the compounding of sweet ointments, in the cutting of precious stones. Chiefly, however, do their scientific attainments strike us with wonder. Their computation of time was very exact; they had discovered the year of 365 $\frac{1}{4}$  days; they had fixed the week of 7 days and the day of 12 hours, the hour of 60 minutes and the minute of 60 seconds. Their system of measures was also duodecimal; thus, the cubit=24 finger-breadths. Although aided by very

<sup>1</sup> The epoch of the building of the Pyramids is, according to Lepsius, 3905-2903 B.C.



simple instruments, they had arrived at astronomical observations so exact that modern science finds but little to correct.

To return now to our perfervid Philo-Hellenes. Wilamowitz, the eminent Homeric critic, has given to the world the following dictum on the subject of Eastern influence as affecting the development of early Greece, a dictum to which we invite the reader's careful attention. "The peoples and states of the Semites and of Egypt," he says, "which had been decaying for centuries, could, in spite of their ancient civilisation, give nothing to the Hellenes but a few handicrafts and technical devices—apparel, ornaments, and wares devoid of taste—repulsive fetishes for still more repulsive idols; in one word, raw material, perhaps, for the employment of Hellenic genius, but never a spark of genius."<sup>1</sup>

There is a real kernel of truth in this outburst, as we shall presently see; but we must not allow it to blind us to facts. When we remember the degree of progress revealed by the second and third stages of Greek culture recorded in our last chapter, we cannot but see that, *pace* the Philo-Hellenes, the East had something of value to offer to Europe—technical skill, the knowledge which gives man power over brute force, the material resources which served the Greeks as stepping-stones to higher things. Let us then see, in the first place, how this knowledge and skill, afar off in Egypt and Babylon, may have been brought nigh to Greece.

Many ingenious attempts have been made to place the earliest Greeks directly in communication with the oldest home of civilisation—Egypt. One of these, brought forward by Lepsius and E. Curtius, we shall notice presently from its exceeding interest in detail. Not only this, however, but all succeeding attempts have failed. With Wiedemann we must confess that, on present evidence, Herodotus is right when he says that the Greeks first settled on the Nile under Psammetichus in the middle of the seventh century B.C., and that with this period the direct intercourse between the two countries began.

As with Egypt, so with the countries on the Euphrates and the Tigris. The name of the Greeks or of Ionian cities has not been found as yet in cuneiform inscriptions before the Persian era.

If the civilisation of Egypt and Babylon, then, was brought to Greece, it must have been by some intermediary. Where shall we find this connecting link? Again we call geography to our aid, and, glancing across the island streams, we see that they, one and all, have their goal in that great peninsula which looks out in the most friendly way towards Europe—Asia Minor. From Asia Minor, then, the first material impetus to progress must have come, as later came the greatest spiritual impulse the world has ever received. The first impulse reached Greece apparently in many ways. Let us examine them.

The great mass of the peninsula of Asia Minor is composed of a plateau, 3000 to 5000 feet above the sea-level, surrounded by a fringe of coast-land. So entirely different in character are these two parts, the plateau and the coast, that the land, as it were, consists of two countries, an Asiatic interior framed by an European coast, each of which has its own distinctive physical geography, its own population, and consequently its own history.

It is, of course, the coast-land bordering on the Ægæan, and facing Greece, which mainly interests us. In its physical features it resembles Greece so closely that we readily perceive both, with the connecting islands, to have been at some remote epoch in the history of the globe parts of one great whole. Asia Minor, however, differs from Greece in one very important particular,

<sup>1</sup> In the original "*wohl ũn für die Bethätigung des Hellenischen λόγος, aber kein Fünkchen λόγος.*"

viz., its position in regard to neighbouring countries. Greece, as we know, is cut off from the rest of Europe by the almost impassable barrier of the Balkan mountains, whereas in Asia Minor communication with the interior, although difficult, is not only possible, but seems to have been steadily maintained from very early times.

(1) **The Interior.**—In the north-east of Asia Minor, the country later known as Galatia, to the east of the river Halys, at the spot now known as Boghaz Keui, have been found the ruins of a great city, the most extensive in the peninsula. Its remains, its wall, embracing a circuit of four or five miles, and the fact that here the oldest and most important roads of the peninsula meet, show that this city must have been at a very early period a great centre, probably "the metropolis of a great empire." The city at Boghaz Keui is, in all probability, the "Pteria" of Herodotus; but this does not concern us here. What touches our argument is that in the heart of Asia Minor there existed, apparently, a ruling city of true oriental type, in which met the two great ancient roads—that from east to west, Susa to the Ægean Sea, and that from north to south, the Black Sea to the lands of the Euphrates.<sup>1</sup>

The inhabitants of Pteria have been identified with the Hittites of Northern Syria, from the similarity existing between the early monuments and hieroglyphic inscriptions of Asia Minor and those of the latter country, but the hypothesis is not yet held as proven.

The ancient empire, of which Pteria is taken as the capital, began to decay, probably about 900 B.C., being pressed on the east by Syrians and Assyrians and on the west by the Phrygians. Who were these Phrygians?

(2) **The Coast-land.**—The western coasts of Asia Minor, bordering on the Ægean, were occupied by races supposed to belong to the great Aryan family—Phrygians, Mysians, Lydians, Lycians, and Carians. Some of these peoples were later pushed up by new-comers into the interior.

(a) *The Phrygians*, say the old writers, were a people who had crossed the Hellespont from Europe, leaving behind them in Macedonia a part of their race, who contrived to dwell, under the name of the Briges, as near neighbours of our Pierian Thracians. These statements were confirmed by the most recent research.

These Phrygians, then, were undoubtedly an Aryan race (see Appendix); and their language, as seen in old inscriptions, presents many affinities with the Greek. This fact was, indeed, recognised by Plato; in the *Cratylus* he points out that the words for "fire," "water," "dog," are alike in both languages; but, as might be expected, he attributes the resemblances, not to the true cause, a common origin, but to borrowing of one people from the other. That the Briges of Europe and the Phrygians of Asia were originally the same people, is proved by the connection of their myths and sagas. The rose-gardens of King Midas were placed in Europe on the slopes of Mount Bermion, the home of the Briges, whilst the tomb of a King Midas has been discovered in Asia Minor near Prymnessus.

(b) *Mysians, Lydians, and Lycians.* Of the early history of these peoples

<sup>1</sup> The "Royal Road," so called because the service of the great king passed along it, ran from Susa to Ephesus, taking this unknown city in the way. "But," says Professor W. M. Ramsay, "it is an accepted fact that in several other cases roads of the Persian empire were used by the Assyrian kings long before the Persian time, and, in particular, that the eastern part of the 'Royal Road,' from Cilicia to Susa, is much older than the beginning of the Persian power."—*Histor. Geog. of Asia Minor*, p. 27.

Again, "an important road probably existed, connecting Pteria with Assyria by the anti-Taurus region," *ibid.*, p. 35.



very little is known. It is probable that they amalgamated freely with the native races.

(c) *Carians*. Here we have to do with a bold, warlike, enterprising race. Their presence is traceable not only in Asia, but on the islands of the Ægean, and possibly on the mainland of Europe. They are often associated with their "doubles," the Leleges; but we shall probably not err if we regard the latter as aborigines, conquered by the Carians.

If, now, following the example of the later Hellenes, we were to regard these peoples of Asia Minor—Phrygians, Lydians, Lycians, and Carians—as "barbarians," we should greatly err. The progress made by the nations on the Euphrates and the Tigris, Babylonians and Assyrians, must have penetrated throughout Asia Minor long before it reached Europe. Then, too, there is to be taken into account that influence of which we are still so ignorant—the degree of culture developed by the old "Hittite" empire of Pteria, traces of which are supposed to exist in the "Great Treasure" of the hill of Hissarlik. Hence, if in the Homeric poems the Phrygians and other Eastern peoples appear as on the same level of culture as the Greeks, in the still earlier days of which we are speaking, it is more than probable that they were much in advance of the latter, as the natural result of their greater proximity to the seats of the oldest civilisation.

There only remains for us now to trace the island-bridges by which this ancient civilisation and its bearers reached Greece. If we climb once more the heights of Pelion with those old prospectors, the Little Folk of Hellas, one of these routes lies before us (p. 134), the most northerly of all. Beneath is the Pagasæan Gulf, the scene of the launching of the "Argo"—beyond it the open sea—with the bridge of Sciathus, Peparethus, Icus, Polyægus, Lemnos, Tenedos, ending in Phrygia and the Troad. The route that took the Achæan wanderers later to Lemnos and the Troad, doubtless brought the Phrygians in earlier times to the Pagasæan Gulf and Greece.

A glance at the map will show that the Lycians and Carians had for selection no fewer than three or four different island-bridges, further south, which would conduct them to Eubœa, Attica, or Argos. What precisely were the routes taken, it is impossible to say. The choice would depend on the relative advantages of anchorage and the probable perils of rocks, winds, and waves; but that both the Eastern peoples and the Greeks were familiar with these island-bridges long before the time of the Great Migrations, there is no reason to doubt.

We now pass on to another and a very essential factor in the scattering abroad of the early seeds of civilisation—this time a Semitic, not an Aryan, race.

**The Phœnicians**, or Canaanites, dwelt in the fertile coast-land of Syria, bordering on the mighty range of the Lebanon, the White Mountain, which towers behind with its snows and its giant cedars. A land of fruit and flowers, of the palm-tree, the pomegranate, and the olive, is Phœnicia, but her bounds soon became all too strait for her sons. Great prospectors, like the Little Folk, they very early espied, lying as it were "a shield upon the waters," the great island of Cyprus, and thither they first diverted their little barks. These sea-faring Canaanites were known to neighbouring nations, to the Hebrews and Greeks, as the "Sidonians," from Sidon, the fisher-town, their first great centre. Tyre = Sôr, "the Rock," the city (on a rocky island) in the sea, rose into power later. To the Egyptians, Phœnicia was known as *Kaft*, the Phœnicians themselves as *Fenchu*, whence the Greek *Phœnician*.

Everywhere went these old Canaanites, Sidonians, or Fenchu, unconsciously to themselves fulfilling with narrow aims their task in the world's development

—to Egypt and Babylon, to Gades, through the Pillars of Heracles to our own isles and the Baltic, possibly also to India. Let us follow them in that more restricted voyage which now specially concerns us.

**Cyprus**, as we have said, with its waving forests, offering timber for their vessels, was the first goal of the Phœnicians, and here with their indefatigable industry they developed the natural wealth of the island, the copper from which it takes its name, and planted the great cities of Paphos and Amathus. Wherever the Phœnicians went, they took with them the cults of their great deities, Baal Moloch, their greatest god, Melkarth, the city king,<sup>1</sup> and Astarte; the latter became in a special sense the “Cyprian” goddess, blended with the Greek Aphrodite (Venus). There is no historic trace in Cyprus of any inhabitants before the Phœnicians. As early as the fifteenth century B.C. the island figures as a dependent province of Egypt. In an inscription Ammon says to Dhutimes III., King of Egypt (about 1450 B.C.), that he has subdued for him Kaft (Phœnicia), Asebi (Cyprus), the Isles in the Great Sea and the Isles of the “Tenan.” Whether these “Tenan” are the Danaans (Greeks), as some maintain, or not, is a point which it would, perhaps, be rash to attempt to decide.

**Rhodes**, the next goal of the Phœnicians, lies at the entrance to the Ægean Sea. The island is thought to have been previously colonised by the Carians; but however this may have been, the Phœnicians have left unmistakable tokens of their presence upon it. The graves of Ialysus, their chief colony, have yielded objects of Phœnician manufacture of great interest, now in the British Museum; and at Cameirus, the Semitic name of a mountain, Atabyrion (Tabor = height), and the worship upon it of Baal in the form of a bull, a worship accompanied by the offering up of human sacrifices, bore witness, even in later ages, to the Phœnicians and their fanatical rites.

**Crete**, which was probably their next station, became apparently the Phœnician headquarters in regard to Hellas, for here at Cnossus and Gortyn were localised the myths of Minos and Europa. Minos may be taken as the representative of Phœnician dominion and city life; his man-devouring bull, the Minotaur, is Baal Moloch again; and Europa is Astarte, worshipped here under the name of Hellotis, “my goddess.”

From Crete we can easily follow the Phœnicians to the island of Cythera, where their temple to Astarte passed, in later ages, for the oldest sanctuary of Aphrodite in Hellas. The importance of the cult here is proved by the name Cythereia, given to the goddess in Homer.

From Cythera we trace the Phœnicians to Thera, Melos, and Thasos among the islands; and on the mainland to Tænarum; round the formidable Cape Malea up the Argolic Gulf to Nauplia; round the peninsula and up the Saronic Gulf to Corinth; and thence round the point of Sunium to Marathon and Eubœa; finally, perhaps, to the Pagasæan Gulf and Iolcus in Thessaly. If the reader will take the trouble to follow the course of these ancient mariners round the mainland on a map, he will see that it corresponds closely with the localities in which evidence of the “Mycenæan” culture has been found.

<sup>1</sup> Melkarth or Melgart (*Melek* = king, *kartha* = city) appears originally as a mere epithet for Baal, the ruler of the city. The two names drifted asunder, and later both Phœnicians and Greeks identified Melkarth with Heracles (Hercules). (Cf. Rawlinson, *Phœnicia*, p. 330.) Some historians regard Heracles as originally a Phœnician deity, but this is to lay stress far too great on certain Asiatic elements imported later into the Heracles saga-cycle. The view taken by most modern writers that Heracles is a genuine Hellenic god, who may be put by the side of Melkarth, is undoubtedly the correct one. (Cf. E. Meyer, *Gesch. des Alterthums*, p. 192.) Heracles embodies some of the most intensely distinctive features of the Greek national character.



Such were the various nations, Aryan and Semitic, who may have brought the seeds of a more advanced civilisation, its virtues and its vices, to the primitive shepherds of the Greek mountains. Now let us examine the evidence on which rests this great factor in the making of Hellas—intercourse with the East.

Up to the present time this evidence is rather indirect and circumstantial than direct—it can be found neither by inscriptions nor by coins—nevertheless, it may be regarded even now as conclusive, and every day is adding to our store of proof. The evidence before us falls under four heads: place-names (a witness not to be unduly pressed), traces of foreign cults introduced into Greece, the ancient local sagas, and the “oldest monuments,” a phrase which, in the sense of evidence, includes the frail, insignificant glass bead found in the oldest settlements at Tiryns equally with the mighty, time-defying walls which have enclosed and preserved it.

1. **Phrygia.**—The evidence that the Greeks were early familiar with the land of Troy and of Priam is briefly as follows:—

(a) *The cult of the Greek Rhea* is undoubtedly Phrygian in its origin. Father Zeus, the greatest god of Hellas—Dyauspitar of India, Jupiter of Rome—is in the beginning without father, mother, or descent. When the time came for the great anthropomorphic development of the Greek religion, and the gods were fashioned in the likeness of man, the Greeks had no native gods worthy or great enough to take the place of father or mother to the Heaven-Father. The Aryan Ouranos (Uranus = Indian Varuna) had sunk in Greece to a mere shadow. Later, he was revived by Hesiod and his school, and became the grandfather of Zeus; but Homer knows nothing of Uranus. He knows, however, that Zeus had a father, Kronos, and a mother, Rhea. This Rhea the Greeks honoured from the Phrygians. She is their Cybele, the Mountain-Mother, the Great Goddess, whose cult was of immense importance in Asia Minor. The little golden female figure seated, with the arms folded across the chest, which we saw in the pit-graves of Mycenæ (p. 169), corresponds exactly to the cult image of the Great Mother on Mount Sipylus, near Magnesia in Asia Minor.<sup>1</sup>

(b) *The celebrated relief on the Lions' Gate* at Mycenæ also (p. 165) points to Phrygia. Professor W. M. Ramsay, to whose intimate knowledge of Asia Minor we owe so much, has found in the façade of the great rock-graves of Phrygia older and severer forms, evidently prototypes, of the same device. The column in the middle may be the symbol of Apollo Agyieus, the Way-god, to whom the Cassandra of Æschylus so pathetically appeals;<sup>2</sup> the lions are intimately connected with the cult of Cybele, the Great Mother.

(c) Professor Adeler traces the form of the beehive tombs to the subterranean dwellings of Phrygia; but, as we have reason to believe, such dwellings were common to the Aryan peoples in prehistoric times,<sup>3</sup> not confined to Phrygia. He also finds Phrygian influence in the brick walls of the palaces of Tiryns and Mycenæ, for “the clay-beds of the broad valley of the Hermus are inexhaustible.” Here again, however, we prefer to go farther afield, and connect the brick walls of Greece with those of Babylon.

(d) The story of Niobe, wife of Amphon of Thebes, and daughter of Tantalus, the old king, according to some, of Lydia, according to others, of Phrygia, is intimately connected with Mount Sipylus and the Hermus valley.

<sup>1</sup> For an account of Rhea-Cybele, see *Hellas*.

<sup>2</sup> “Ah, Way-god! Way-god! whither hast thou brought me?” (*Æsch.*, *Ag.* 1065.) For the functions and symbols of Apollo, see *Hellas*.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. pp. 126 and 167.

We may note here, by the way, that the famous statue of "Niobe" on Sipylus is now held to be a cult-image of Cybele, the Great Mother.

(e) The peculiar form of cross found so commonly among the gold ornaments at Mycenæ is to be seen, according to Milchhæfer, on the façade of the grave of Midas (see *ante*, p. 168).

2. **Lycia and Lydia.**—The evidence here is very slight.

(a) The myth of the Lycian Cyclopes who built the walls of Tiryns for King Proetus (p. 158). Professor Adeler, however, thinks that he has twice discovered, indicated in relief, ceilings of round beams peculiar to Lycia, and seen to this day in the huts of the region.

(b) The sagas of Niobe and Tantalus are often associated with "Lydia" as well as with "Phrygia" by the old writers.

(c) The three-star and four-star ornaments found at Mycenæ are seen again, according to Milchhæfer, on Lydian coins.

3. **The Carians.**—Of the influence of this people in early Greece there is proof (presumptive) so strong that, shortly after the discovery of the Mycenaean pit-graves, the theory of a Carian origin of the latter and of the graves at Sparta was brought forward by Köhler. We have already said (p. 179) that the Carian race was widespread over the islands. This is affirmed by Herodotus, and the statement is confirmed by Thucydides, who also mentions that in the ceremonial cleansing of the Island of Delos by the Athenians in 426 B.C. more than half the graves were discovered, from the mode of burial adopted, to be those of Carians. Aristotle, again, held that Hermione and Epidaurus, on the coast of Argolis, had been peopled by Carian settlers; and from the fact that one of the two citadels of Megaris was named Caria, Pausanias draws the conclusion that it had been built by Car, the eponym, or name-giving founder of the Carian nation.

Whatever we may think of etymology as a basis, there can be no doubt that the Carians were a warlike, enterprising people, probably with a touch of "dash" about them which the primitive Greeks admired and imitated, if we are to believe the story that they borrowed from the Carians the waving crest on their helmets and the devices and handles of their shields.

Now let us note that the Carians worshipped Zeus as Stratios, whose symbol, as seen on their coins, was the double axe, emblematic not only of the god of war, but primarily of the wielder of the lightning and the thunderbolt; let us call to mind the fact mentioned by Herodotus, that in his day worship was paid in Athens to the Carian Zeus; let us bring these two facts into connection with the fifty-six little ox-heads bearing a double-axe between the horns, found in the pit-graves of Mycenæ, and we shall have no difficulty in seeing how Köhler arrived at his "Carian" hypothesis.

This latter seemed to be strengthened also by the fact that the bodies in the pit-graves had evidently been—not burned, according to the Homeric and (as it was believed) the Greek custom—but embalmed after the fashion of the East. Wide and deep-reaching conclusions were drawn from this: here, it was thought, lay the evidence of a difference in religious belief. In Egypt and the East the preservation and safety of the body are linked to those of the soul; in Homer, the body must be burned (or committed to earth) before its late tenant can find rest. We can only say on this point that there is no evidence as to what the Carians believed about death and the soul; and that, so far as the Greeks are concerned, the question of burning *versus* burying seems to have been, as Helbig points out, very much one of sentiment and of convenience. In their nomad days they burned their dead, in order that the precious ashes might go with them; when settled, they probably prac-



tised burial, as is seen from the legends of the finding of the remains of Pelops, Ariadne, Theseus, and Orestes; when forced to leave their native land, burning resumed its old place, and then became "the fashion," as in Homer; afterwards burial and burning are found together.

As a whole the "Carian" hypothesis is too narrow for present knowledge and altogether inadequate to bear the weight even of the pit-graves' evidence, to say nothing of that wider evidence which reaches from Sparta to Thessaly. Carian influence is a factor, certainly, in the Mycenæan culture, but only one out of many factors.

4. **The Phœnicians.**—The proof of the presence of the Phœnicians on Greek soil is afforded by all four classes of evidence. To begin with the weakest:—

(a) *Place-names.*—The name *Tenarum* = smelting-house or furnace, and *Malea* = *Malah* = height, are thought to be Semitic in origin.

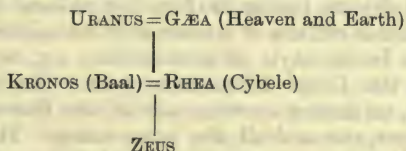
(b) *Sagas.*—The legends of Cadmus in Thebes (p. 144); of Sisyphus in Corinth (p. 139); of Nauplius and Palamedes in Argos (p. 160); of Europa and Minos and his Minotaur; and in Crete (p. 180), of the Marathonian bull and the tribute of children paid by the Athenians to Crete (p. 155) are one and all held to give unmistakable evidence of Phœnician influence.

(c) *Cults.*—The influence of Baal Moloch, the Phœnician chief god, is traceable in two ways:—

(1) In the practice of human sacrifices in Bœotia, Corinth, and elsewhere; and

(2) In the addition to the Greek pantheon of Baal under the name of Kronos.

The reader will recollect that a mother had been found for Zeus in the Phrygian Cybele; for a father the Greeks looked to another nation: the consort of the Græco-Phrygian Rhea-Cybele is the Græco-Phœnician Kronos-Baal. Thus the genealogy which we find in Hesiod was completed:—



The Phœnician Melkarth became blended at several points with the Greek Heracles, and the same transition is noticeable between the Syrian goddess Astarte and the Greek Aphrodite (p. 180). The little golden figures found in the pit-graves, representing a female with a dove on the shoulder or head (p. 169), are images of Astarte, and the little building with doves at the corners (of which there are several examples) probably depicts the temple of the goddess at Paphos.

*Monuments.*—Let us pass in review many of the objects found in the pit-graves of Mycenæ—the inlaid daggers representing the lion-hunt and the ducks among the papyrus-reeds, the silver vase with the lotus-flower decoration, the ostrich egg, the objects of glass—and we shall instinctively think of Egypt. And our instinct will be right. In an Egyptian grave of the sixteenth century has recently been found an inlaid sword decorated in the same style as those of Mycenæ. And not only the daggers, but the masks, the breast-plates, and the embalming point to Egypt and its customs transmitted through some intermediary. But who could this intermediary have been, who could have brought these objects and these customs from that far-off land, the land of the papyrus and the lotus, with which Greece, as we

have seen, had no direct intercourse, save and except the universal carriers and "go-betweens," the Phœnicians? Who, further, brought the amber-beads found in such profusion, and proved by analysis to be the amber of the Baltic, save the Phœnicians?

When we come above ground the same evidence meets us—on all sides it is agreed that to Egyptian influence is due the beautiful ceiling with its rosettes and palm-leaves at Orchomenus (p. 174), the splendid frieze of alabaster and smalt at Tiryns (p. 173), possibly also the half-pillars guarding the door of the Treasury of Atreus (p. 166). The influence of Babylon, again, is traceable in the brick walls of the palaces of Tiryns and Mycenæ, and in the custom of clothing walls and doors with polished metal, a custom which spread to Egypt but began in Mesopotamia, and possibly grew out of the desire to hide the bareness and meanness of the brick structure—a course forced upon a land which has neither stone nor marble.

Finally, we come to a piece of evidence more astonishing (because more unexpected) than any yet considered. The system of fortification—represented at Tiryns—the immensely thick walls, hiding within them corridors and chambers, are found, according to Dörpfeld, nowhere else save in the Phœnician settlements on the northern coast of Africa—Carthage, Thapsus, Hadrumetum, Utica, and Thysdrus. Thus the architects of the mighty walls of Tiryns were no other than these same Phœnicians whom the Greeks despised, and whom we ourselves are accustomed to regard as traders and carriers and nothing more.

The foregoing brief survey has shown what the so-called Mycenæan culture proves—the fact, namely, that the primitive Greeks were exposed to the most manifold and many-sided influences. Egypt, Babylon and Assyria, Phœnicia, Phrygia, Lycia, Caria, and the islands all are represented in it. That this culture did not grow up in Greece is proved not only by the discovery of so many Eastern types and objects, but by the fact that no local differences are discernible. The true Hellenic culture of a later date astonishes us by its variety and distinctiveness—the Ionian style of architecture, *e.g.*, is not the same as the Corinthian, whilst the Doric differs from both. In the "Mycenæan" culture, on the contrary, no matter on what part of the Eastern coast "finds" have been made, they bear, one and all, the same stamp. It is evident, therefore, that we have to do with an art which had fully developed abroad and simply been transplanted to Greece. This art is unique in its way, for in it Egypt and Babylon have met and been fused into one. The "Mycenæan" culture is the culture of Asia Minor.

Had, then, the Greeks themselves no share in it? Undoubtedly! but—under the tutelage of their masters and teachers, the Phœnicians. Here is sometimes brought forward the old objection that the mere passing intercourse with traders, who came to hold a bazaar for the sale of their wares and departed again in a few days, could by no possibility have had the far-reaching effects attributed to it. Granted!—the Phœnicians, however, were something more than traders. They were not only the great merchants of antiquity, but they had also as a nation an astonishing aptitude for invention—of a certain sort. "They kept an ever-watchful look-out for the inventions of others," that is, "and immediately applied them to themselves, with some grand improvements on the original idea." The Phœnician, as trader and inventor, would seem, indeed, to have been a character not unfamiliar to us in modern life. Nevertheless, this very aptitude for appropriating and assimilating inventions was all-essential in those whose world-task was the transmission and diffusion of inventions, and in the Phœnician it was combined in a most remarkable way



with other characteristics no less essential for the task—energy and determination. The Phœnicians became the greatest miners and metallurgists, artificers and manufacturers of the ancient world, and they came to Greece in all these varied rôles, as well as in that of the merchant. They brought, indeed, the gay robes and glittering ornaments that dazzled the eyes of the simple Pelasgian shepherd and won from him his wool, skins, and timber; but they had other objects in view. The seas around the eastern coast of Greece were rich in the murex, that shell-fish whose sac yielded the purple which dyed the famous robes of Sidon and of Tyre; the mountain-veins of Greece, contained not only copper and iron, but gold. These were commodities required to feed the great factories of Syria, and they were not to be obtained easily. The murex knew his value, and gave his captors some trouble; he could only be taken in the winter months—the season unfavourable to navigation—and then the extraction of the precious drop of colouring matter had to be made from the fresh shell-fish on the spot. The bulky mountain ores had also to be smelted and refined before the metal sought could be carried away—processes which necessitated a more or less protracted stay in Greece. That this protracted stay actually took place, that the Phœnicians actually settled at various points along the coast—at Tænarum = “the smelting-house,” Nauplia, Corinth, &c.—is held to be proved above all by the deep root struck by their cults into the native religion (see *ante*, p. 180). This is not the work of a day nor of a passing visit. Again, the gold mines of Thasos, the later reputation of Mēlos and Thēra for gay robes, &c., with other witnesses of the same kind, bear testimony to a lengthened residence on certain of the islands near the mainland. Thus it came to pass that the Greeks saw going on before their eyes the wonderful processes by which the strangers with their magic fingers came into possession of the much coveted ornamental knives, sharp swords, shining metal vases, and purple mantles.

The Phœnicians are known to have been in the Ægæan Sea in the fifteenth century B.C. (see *ante*, p. 180); the date of the Mycenæan treasures is generally taken as about 1250 B.C.; we have thus a period of some 200 years during which the Greeks had the opportunity of “going to school” to the Eastern civilisation. That they availed themselves of it there can be no doubt. As Helbig well puts it, “the Greeks, a primitive but highly-gifted people, capable of development, gave themselves up at first without reserve (*rückhaltslos*) to the charms of the East. They were quite content for a time to sit down at the feet of their masters, and reproduce Eastern models.

Can we, then, attribute to the Greeks themselves any of the precious artworks of the pit-graves? One thing is certain, that some of the articles must have been made on the spot—the masks, for instance, and probably other details of the funeral equipment. Again, the very frequent recurrence of sea-subjects in the decoration on vases and gold plates—the algæ and cuttlefish (p. 168)—show that the makers of the objects so adorned were a seafaring race. This epithet applies to Phœnicians and Carians as well as to Greeks; but then we remember that the cuttlefish plays a prominent part in one of the earliest Greek myths. Thetis, the mother of Achilles, changes herself into a cuttlefish to escape the hated union with a mortal, and the part of the coast which she was supposed to haunt commemorates this (or the abundance there of the animal in question), for it bore the name—Sepias = Cape of the Cuttlefish.

While we must consider the most beautiful objects in the pit-graves—the sceptre of rock-crystal, the splendid diadems, the inlaid daggers, the glass, the alabaster vase, the golden goblets, the rings and engraved gems—as articles of vertu evidently imported to grace the palace of a prince, we may safely regard

many of the more simple objects as the product of native skill wrought under Phœnician direction.

If the theory of Greek labour is admissible even in the workmanship of the treasures in the pit-graves, it becomes absolutely necessary to account for such a phenomenon as that before us in the walls of Tiryns. The "Carian" hypothesis here completely falls to the ground. As Adeler observes: "The walls of Tiryns cannot have been built in a hurry, in the sight of the enemy, or as the first stronghold of an invasion based on maritime supremacy. The colossal walls tell every one able to read the language of stones that their erection can only have been effected in a long period of peace, by a ruler with unusual resources of power, and who had trained workmen under his permanent control." The beehive tombs and the palaces tell the same tale—we see in them, as in the walls of Tiryns, native energy and native resources directed by foreign trained skill.

With the foregoing evidence before our eyes, we can now see the true answer to the scornful question of Wilamowitz, "What had the East to offer to Greece?" Much, we reply, that cannot be so contemptuously dismissed. In early ages, the elements of material civilisation—working in metal, building in stone, artistic weaving and dyeing, numerous plants and animals which conduced to the comfort and convenience of life, the olive, the fig, and other fruits, the patient ass and the mule, many trees and flowers, the rose, the laurel, the myrtle, the plane—that beautified and transformed the European coasts of the *Ægæan*.<sup>1</sup> In later days the East is still in some ways the giver, Greece the receiver—from Egypt she borrowed her system of field measurements, as has been shown by Cantor, and much of her knowledge of medicine, as is plain from the researches of Le Page Renouf; from Babylon were derived the Greek division of time and Greek weights and measures, as has been conclusively proved by Adeler and Boeckh; through Phœnicia, finally, she received that greatest benefit of all—the alphabet, the grand transmitter of progress.

It will not be overrating the importance of all this to the Greeks, if we say, in brief, that it saved them centuries of toil. Other men had laboured, the Greeks entered into their labours. This is only what we should have expected. There is no waste in the Divine Economy. The beginnings of civilisation had been made, and well made, in the old empires of Egypt and Babylon; there was no need for these foundations to be re-made. They were brought over by the great carriers of the world, the Phœnicians, to virgin soil, to a fresh, young, vigorous nation destined for higher work. By one great leap, as it were, the Greeks acquired the old material bases of civilisation, which had been the slow growth of ages. They were thus set free after a preparatory discipline to begin that higher development which was the mission of their race. In no other way can we account for the stage of culture attained in Greece at so relatively early an epoch. Climate unravels many mysteries, but climate alone will not unravel this, however much it may have helped (p. 20). Genius is the key to the development of a race, but even genius has to be assisted over material obstacles, or it will spend itself in conquering these obstacles, and Greek genius was reserved for different work. When we reflect that the Greek Aryans left the Old Home at the same level of culture as the other branches of the family—that the Greeks had laid the foundations of art, literature, science, philosophy, and a true political life, whilst our own ancestors were as yet savages, tattooing their bodies by way of

<sup>1</sup> See Part I., Section I.



ornament, and with no social development beyond mere tribal life—we cannot but see that, making all allowance for genius, the Greeks must have been in possession of some advantage not enjoyed by the northern peoples. This advantage can have been nothing else than very early initiation into the arts already developed by the peoples of the East.

To admit this in no way detracts from the merit of the Hellenes as experimenters, for the same opportunities had been put before all the other Aryan tribes that settled round the Ægæan. Thracians, Phrygians, Lycians, Carians, all began the race on equal terms with the Greeks; one and all stopped short, the Greeks alone used the material as a stepping-stone to the ideal, and so fulfilled their world-mission.

While, however, we admit to the fullest extent the influence of the East in material things, we must draw the line firmly when the attempt is made to extend this influence unduly into things intellectual and spiritual. We join hands at once with Wilamowitz, and cry "Halt!" when a Gruppe endeavours to prove that the Greeks received, not only the material bases of culture, but their religion itself from the Phœnicians.<sup>1</sup> Such a theory is at variance alike with the evidence of the Greek language and religion, and with the standing witness of both Greek and Phœnician character. The Greeks had fortunately lived long enough alone in their mountain cantons, before the arrival of the Phœnicians, to develop their entire individuality—their language, and with it their religion. The basis of both language and religion they brought with them from the old Aryan home. Dr. Schrader has proved, from the purity of the Greek nautical terminology, that the Hellenes were sailors long before they knew the Phœnicians (see *ante*, p. 11, *note*); and in like manner it could be demonstrated, from the purity of the Greek religious vocabulary, that they were believers in the Divine long before the Phœnicians could have exercised any influence whatever upon them. To imagine that a race like the Hellenes, gifted with vivid imaginations and intellectual powers of the highest order, sat for ages in material darkness until a Phœnician mission-ship (save the mark!), following in the wake of the trading ships, conveyed to them the divine spark, is a notion in itself ludicrous enough; but its baselessness becomes doubly apparent when we turn to the earliest available records, and there find the opinion entertained of the Phœnician character by the Greeks. In Homer the name "Phœnician" is coupled with the epithets "deceitful" and "greedy" in a way that speaks for itself. In the story invented by Odysseus for the benefit of the swineherd Eumæus, he tells of a Phœnician practised in deceit—a greedy knave, who had already worked much mischief, and who added thereto this, that while professing friendship for Odysseus, he intended all the while to sell him into bondage. The hero makes this fictitious Mephistopheles a "Phœnician" evidently as a matter of course; and in the next book of the *Odyssey*, in the real history which Eumæus gives of his own life, he too brings forward the Phœnicians as the authors of all his troubles. It is a Phœnician maid-servant, aided by her accomplices, Phœnician sailors, "famous mariners, greedy merchant men" by whom he is stolen from his parents, and comes into the vile estate of slavery.

These side-lights in Homer are suggestive enough, and they tally minutely with what we know of the Phœnician national character. Even Homer, it is

<sup>1</sup> This theory owes its only importance to the fact that it has been put forward by Dr. Gruppe in his recent work already referred to. *Die Griechische Kulte und Mythen*. Gruppe's power as a "destructive" critic is undoubted; but we question whether any "constructive" theories so feeble as several of these advanced in the book were ever set forth by a writer of the same ability.

true, has an occasional good word for the Phœnicians, and we ourselves cannot withhold a certain meed of praise from them. When we see these first mariners in their frail barks, venturing out "into the wild and boundless Atlantic, with its mighty tides, its huge rollers, blinding mists and fogs, without chart or compass, guided only by the stars"—when we see them thus accomplishing their world-task as transporters of civilisation, in the teeth of every conceivable danger, we are filled with the admiration which resolution and boldness always inspire. Nevertheless, as Deutsch, who is in some respects an admirer of the Phœnicians, is obliged to admit, they exhibited as a nation "total disregard of the rights of the weaker, unscrupulousness, and want of faith."

Moreover, the Phœnicians themselves were not civilised in the true sense; they were simply carriers of civilisation, bearers to ruder nations of the achievements of Egypt and Babylon. True, they were great adapters, and had themselves developed, and made wondrous progress in, the material arts, as we have seen; but their character, as they stand before us in early history, is mainly that of intermediaries, mercenary "go-betweens," borrowers of ideas to be worked out for material ends. The object of all their hazardous adventures seems to have been to fill their pockets as fast as possible, and then return to their own land. If they made more than a passing visit to Greece and the islands, it was because what they came for could not be obtained in a hurry. They wanted gold, and therefore they were content to remain on Thasos and develop the mining industry there; they wanted dye-stuff for the Tyrian factories, and therefore they took up their abode on Cythera and the adjoining coasts on the mainland, where enormous heaps of shells still testify to their industry. Wealth, and wealth alone, was the object of their visits—timber, metal, wool, the purple dye, slaves, they came to seek, and were determined to get, by fair means or by foul. The Greeks knew perfectly well what brought the Phœnicians among them—not the desire to found a city which should become the mother of all the fair and peaceful arts of life, the desire (or, rather, the passion) which lay at the root of Greek enterprise. The motive-power of the Phœnicians was the thirst for gain in its sordid nakedness. Hence, the Phœnician settlements never became, like the Greek colonies, centres of light. The Greeks certainly developed a love for riches as keen as that of the Phœnicians themselves; but there was this intrinsic difference between the two races, that the eye of the Greek mind was the ideal, the eye of the Phœnician the material.

From such teachers the Greek could learn in a material sense—the Phœnician could teach him how to forge his sword and dye his mantle—he could teach him nothing about the nature of God. The Phœnician religion exhibits, as might be expected, in a marked degree the national characteristics. We readily grant that to attempt to summarise or to focus the religious life of a nation in a line or two is a proceeding as dishonest as it is unjust; even the most degenerate religion has some element of good lingering in it. But with all allowances, M. Renan, so far as we can discern, does the Phœnician no wrong when he describes their religion as "materialistic and self-interested" ("selfish" would be nearer the truth); nor is Canon Rawlinson mistaken when he brands it as being amongst all polytheistic systems the most sensual and the most cruel—in its effects the most degrading.

Such was the nation, such the religion, that, according to Gruppe's theory, first kindled among the Greeks the desire to seek after God. The whole theory is as baseless as it is repugnant.

1. It is contradicted, as stated above, by the evidence of language, both of



the old Aryan mother-tongue, as we shall presently see, and of the Greek language. Gruppe himself is obliged to confess that the "agreements between the Greek and Phœnician languages relate generally to the sense"—there is no trace of direct borrowing of religious terms by the Greeks from the Phœnicians, as would certainly have been the case had the Greeks borrowed their religion itself from the Phœnicians, for in ancient days to borrow a "word" was to borrow an "idea." In a footnote he adds, "The number of loan-words proper is trifling." Such loan-words, let us note, are simply names: Iapetus (Japheth), Cadmus, Adonis, &c., names of little or no import in a religious sense.

2. It is contradicted by the attitude of the Greeks towards their supposed spiritual guides. The Greeks may have given themselves up "without reserve" to the charms of Eastern art; but certainly, as regards their belief, the very reverse is the case. Instead of sitting meekly at the feet of the Phœnicians, we find them exercising the greatest caution in accepting Phœnician religious ideas. The Greeks introduced the Phœnician Moloch under the name of Kronos; but they did not introduce the holocausts of children which formed part of the Phœnician cult of Moloch. They blended the Phœnician Astarte with their own Aphrodite, but they rejected much that was repugnant in her cult; they introduced Adonis, the Phœnician representative of dying and reviving nature (the "Tammuz" of the prophet Ezekiel<sup>1</sup>); but there is no trace in Greece of the orgies which made the Lebanon cults of Astarte and Adonis a byword and a reproach even to the heathen world.

And as they acted in regard to Phœnician cults, so do we see the Greeks acting in regard to the cults of other nations with whom, in the earliest days, they came in contact. They introduced, as we know, the Phrygian Cybele, the Mountain-Mother; but they rejected the associated cult of Attys, with its shrieking priests and rites of self-mutilation. Everywhere we find in early Greece evidence of the constant use of a certain faculty—*krino* = I sift, I test, I judge—destined to become one of the main factors in the national development. Is this sifting, testing, judging the attitude of those who have no religious standard, no criterion of their own; no previous conception of what befits the dignity of the Divine Being, and what is likely to please Him? Verily, in things spiritual, the Greeks owed to the East—nothing.

Owed nothing? Nay, we go much further than this. We say that what Greece borrowed from the Phœnicians in religious matters was the reverse of a blessing to her; that if the Phœnician religion or Phœnician national characteristics had been suffered to predominate on her shores, it would have been an unmitigated calamity, not only for Hellas but for Europe.

How this predominance was prevented we shall see in our next chapter.

## THE "ACHÆAN" AGE

The so-called "Achæan" age is the period of the great Mycenæan culture—the age of "Atreus" and "Agamemnon" in Argos, of "Theseus" in Attica. It represents a Middle epoch between the early Pelasgic stage and the true Hellenic development. In it the dominant race is that of the Achæans—not of Thessaly but of Peloponnesus.

This is the age described for us by "Homer." Although we shall probably be right in thinking that the nucleus of the *Iliad* took its rise in the period which it professes to paint, yet, inasmuch as the development of the poem took place very much later, we need not be surprised to find that, to a great extent,

<sup>1</sup> Ezekiel viii. 14.

the conditions of a younger period are transferred to the ancient days of the Mycenæan culture. The state of society, therefore, pictured in the Homeric poems, is not in reality that of the thirteenth century—the age of Mycenæan greatness—but of the poets who tell the story. “Homer,” we must remember, is a collective name—the *Iliad* did not flow in one great stream from one author’s brain. Certainly this greatest of literary puzzles bears the stamp of one master mind, but the proofs of a diversity of origin in many parts—of alterations, omissions, and additions at different times—are too evident to be ignored (see § V.). The date of the *Iliad* as a whole may probably be fixed at the ninth century B.C.; but the so-called “Catalogue of the Ships,” which now finds a place in the Second Book of the *Iliad*, and from which we derive our information as to the various “nations” or clans that took part in the Trojan war, is evidently the work of a later hand, a Bœotian poet, and must be assigned to the latter half of the eighth century B.C. Although the “Catalogue” can claim to be nothing more than an interpolation inserted by a Bœotian for the glorification of his own countrymen, it is still the most ancient document giving any account of the various peoples of Greece, and in this sense of great value. Nevertheless, as a description of the Greece of some centuries before, it is not to be relied upon. Both in the “Catalogue” and in other later portions of the *Iliad* certain of the political conditions which prevailed in historic times are simply transferred to the grand old days of the Mycenæan supremacy, the traditions of whose magnificence lingered on in the memories of the people.

The Pelasgi, for instance, have so completely disappeared, or become merged in stronger races, that we find them mentioned as a distinct people in the *Iliad* only incidentally, as dwellers not in Europe but in Asia, and as fighting not with, but against the Greeks, on the side of Priam and the Trojans. The Minyæ also are on the eve of vanishing; they appear at Iolcus, but in Bœotia they are restricted to two cities—Orchomenus and Aspledon. The Bœotians appear as already settled in Bœotia, Phocians in Phocis, Achaïans in Achaïa, Locrians, Ætolians, Eleians in their respective historic homes.

From this evidence some writers are now anxious to do away with the “Achæan” age altogether. Homer may be a great poet, but as an “historian,” the sooner, in their opinion, he is put out of court the better. Says Dr. Pöhlmann: “The Achæan ‘Argos’ is, like the whole ‘heroic’ political world, nothing to us but an empty phantom;” and in this he is supported by Niese, who argues that the sagas wrongly see in the Homeric Greece the “pre-Doric.” Dr. Niese, however, it is who elsewhere laments that he can so seldom find good building-stones to replace the traditions which he carts away (p. 122, *note*). Those who see in the Homeric Greece the necessary link between the Greece of the sagas and of history, may therefore reasonably ask to be allowed to retain their old opinions until such time as more substantial building-stones have been discovered. We may see with Dr. Busolt that “the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* arose” (or rather took their present shape) “at a time when the wanderings of the tribes had been accomplished”—that Argos is, as in the days of the first real history, the leading community in Peloponnesus—that Sparta is mentioned as a leading city more in the *Odyssey*, the later poem, than in the *Iliad*, which also accords with actual historic development. All this we may see clearly without being thereby driven to reject the Homeric tradition. The “Homeric tradition,” in fact, rightly understood, is the key to the whole subsequent Hellenic development. And what then is this Homeric tradition? Simply the expulsion of the foreigner—the revolt of Greece against the East.



No one has expressed this better than Preller. He says: "The more deeply we penetrate into the oldest history of Greece, in so far as it is penetrable at all, the more do we arrive at the conviction that the distinction between the Pelasgian and the Hellenic epochs consists mainly in this—that in the former foreign influences preponderated, in the latter the true independent Hellenic spirit began to stir, and freed itself from those foreign influences, a result which, without continuous and violent struggles, was not possible." The era of the struggles is Homer's Achæan age. The revolt of Europe against the East did not begin with Marathon—the yoke had been thrown off ages before. The scene of the inevitable conflict would naturally lie where Eastern influence most preponderated—along the Eastern coast, and especially in Argos—the recollection of the deliverance there gathered around certain chieftains, and one episode in the struggle, the chastisement of Phrygia, has come down to us in the pages of Homer, associated with the name of "Agamemnon."

Not Phrygia alone, however, not Caria alone, but a foe far more subtle than either, had to be ejected—the Phœnician, the carrier of a curse as well as of a blessing to Hellas. What brought about the final catastrophe? When race-antipathy exists—and we have seen that it showed itself between Greek and Phœnician—a spark suffices to set the smouldering jealousies in a blaze. The Greek, no doubt, had had to pay dearly for any insight he obtained into Phœnician technique—he had been taken advantage of by the "greedy knaves"; he had seen Greek maidens decoyed on board Phœnician ships, and sold into slavery of the worst kind. To a nation that a few centuries later could create and appreciate the love of a Hector and an Andromache, and paint a Nausicaa, Phœnician manners and customs must, even at this early stage, have been repugnant. Add to race-antipathy and social antipathy the rivalry which must inevitably have set in as soon as the Greek became conscious that he was a match for the Phœnician, and the causes of the expulsion of the foreigner are not far to seek. Out the Phœnician had to go—very probably *sans cérémonie*—and that not only from Argos, but from Attica and any other part of the country wherein he had planted himself. The leading spirits in this great movement may have been the family of the Atridæ (or Pelopidæ, as they were styled later) in Argos, and Theseus in Attica.

The foregoing is Max Duncker's interpretation of the rise of the power of the Atridæ in Argos. They probably took the lead in what we may characterise as a prehistoric anti-Semitic movement, and secured their own position by securing "Greece for the Greeks." The fortress of Tiryns, although devised by Phœnician wits, had probably to be used as a stronghold against Phœnician wits showing themselves too clever by half in the adjacent seaport, Nauplia. Whether the hypothesis be true or not, historically, it is certainly true to human nature.

Looking now at the question broadly, the "Homeric tradition" of an "Achæan" age seems to be supported by the following reasoning:—

1. There is no gainsaying the fact that the "Achæan" age represents a "Middle" epoch, when on the one hand the Pelasgi and other prehistoric peoples are fast disappearing, and when, on the other, neither Ionians nor Dorians have as yet come to the front.

2. Such a Middle epoch is required on the archæological evidence before us; the great buildings of Tiryns and Mycenæ could have been built neither by Pelasgian shepherds nor by hardy Dorian mountaineers, who despised such defences. They bear the strongest testimony to the rule of native princes of some refinement, and possessed of great wealth and power, precisely cor-

responding in influence and rank to Agamemnon, king of men, as described by Homer.

3. The Mycenæan "finds" have been made, and the great buildings of the epoch exist, precisely in the spots indicated by Homer as centres of wealth and power—Mycenæ, Tiryns, Amyclæ, Orchomenus.

4. Such a Middle epoch, again, is expressly required to explain the great gulf existing between Pelasgia and historic times, as evidenced by the pit-graves. The latter give the strongest testimony to Eastern influence—an influence which the Historic Greeks knew nothing of, save in the shape of myth and saga. This absolute break is attributable to one factor only—the expulsion of the foreigner.

That this took place during the "Mycenæan" period may, perhaps, be gathered from the fact that the richest amongst the pit-graves of Mycenæ (I., III., IV.) are thought to be earlier than the more simple ones (II., V., VI.). After "Atreus" had expelled the Phœnicians, he would be obliged to content himself with a lesser degree of magnificence.

5. The story of the Siege of Troy offers nothing at all improbable in itself; rather, on the contrary, does it present us with just such a combination of events as we might expect. The carrying off of the wife of a European chieftain by an Asiatic princeling—an expedition to avenge the insult—there is nothing in this that exceeds the bounds of probability. True, superhuman elements permeate the Homeric narrative in every direction, but this is the poet's way of telling the story; the superhuman does not make void the human in it. The idea that the Siege of Troy is only a version of the Solar Myth, in which Achilles represents the sun, Helen the dawn, Troy the region of darkness, we can only dismiss, with Professor Jebb, as "fantastic." The story would seem to have had its nucleus in some real historic occurrence, which early formed the subject of a poem, and gradually widened in its significance until it had acquired the importance of an event of the first magnitude. In this way the "Achæan" name also gradually extended, until it embraced all the heroes and races of Greece who gather around Troy, which is defended, not only by Phrygians, but by the allies of Priam, all the chief races of Asia Minor. In this way, finally, the *Iliad* itself widened out, and became the National Epos—Greece *versus* Asia.

As for the scene of the contest, Ilion or Troy, we have seen that a distinguished archaeologist is willing to accept the city of Homer as a fact. Professor W. M. Ramsay regards Troy as the first settlement on Asiatic soil made by the Phrygians (p. 178). Whether the Burnt City, discovered by Schliemann, on the Hill of Hissarlik, is the "Troy of Homer" or not, is a question which will never be definitely answered, for the simple reason that the "Troy of Homer" probably never existed in all its details save in imagination. The plain of the Scamander, and the mountains that bound it, are described in the *Iliad* with wonderful fidelity. Nature does not vary; but how are we to expect a faithful description of a place which the poet had never seen? The old fortress of Ilion was burnt, and probably built over, long before those who told the story of its fate had set foot in the Troad. Further, we have here not to do with one poet, but with several, each of whom, while adhering to the general picture, doubtless exercised the freedom of his calling as to details.

Bearing these factors in mind, then, one cannot but admit that Dr. Schliemann has discovered the city of Priam, in so far as it ever will be discovered. The city on Hissarlik undoubtedly answers many requirements of the story. With its gigantic citadel-walls, its old palace, its treasures of gold and silver,



it merits right well the appellation of a royal fortress; whilst its position near the sea explains both the secret of its wealth and the maritime supremacy which the Phrygians enjoyed for a time. Let us note, too, that although the golden treasures first discovered on Hissarlik are quite different in style from those of the pit-graves, and probably much older than the latter, yet that the ornaments found in subsequent excavations belong to the Mycenaean period, a proof that the destruction of the city did not take place earlier than that period, which, again, tallies with the Homeric tradition. We may note, further, that the ground-plan of the city on Hissarlik corresponds with those of Mycenæ and Tiryns. Finally, the evidences of its fate are not to be dismissed as valueless. The city on Hissarlik was destroyed by fire, so, according to the tradition, was Homer's Ilion.<sup>1</sup> The real pith and marrow, however, of any historical interest which the Achaean age may possess for us is, that it offers the first recorded protest of the Greeks against Asiatic influence. The expedition of United Greece against Asia is the first recorded evidence of the shaking off of the yoke of the East. The Hellenic child has become a youth; he no longer requires a schoolmaster; he feels stirring within him his own innate powers. Henceforth, the Hellenes will pursue the course marked out for them by Providence, and develop themselves "entirely out of themselves."

We now pass on to another and a different epoch. Just as the Pelasgian age had faded before the Achaean, so this in its turn must give place to the Hellenic, as the grey dawn vanishes before the beams of morning, brightening out into the clear light of day.

## THE THESSALIAN INVASION

The event which is held to constitute the turning-point between the Mythic and the Historic periods of Greece took place in that land which we now know so well as the cradle of the great Hellenic races. Sixty years after the Trojan war (so Thucydides tells us), there appeared in the Great Plain a race destined to give to the latter its historic name—the Thessalians—a warlike people, who are supposed to have crossed the Pindus range from Thesprotia, in the wild land of Epeirus.

This incursion may well have been induced by causes from without—the first impetus may have been given beyond the limits of Greece. The Thessalians may themselves have been driven out of Epeirus by a descent on the country of the Illyrians from the north; and these Illyrians, again, may have been forced southwards by the pressure of a general wave of emigration from Central Europe.<sup>2</sup>

Whatever its origin, the Thessalian invasion begins that long series of wars and wanderings of the tribes, which finally resulted in the new order of things—the Greece of historic times.

Ensconcing themselves in the south-western corner of the plain—the province to which their own name was first applied, Thessaliotis, then known as Æolis, with its chief town, Arne, a district inhabited by the Æolians—the new-comers gave the original proprietors pretty plainly to understand that there was no choice before them but slavery or exile. The true Hellenic spirit

<sup>1</sup> The whole of the evidence touching the two rival claimants for the site of Troy, Bunarhaschi and Hissarlik, is ably summed up in Schuchhardt's work, to which we refer the reader.

<sup>2</sup> Helbig is of opinion that an incursion of the Illyrian Veneti took place about the same time on the eastern coasts of the Apennine peninsula, forcing the Latins and Etruscans across the mountains to their historic homes on the western side. (*Op. cit.* p. 94.)

was, however, now awake, and an exodus of the more noble-minded among the Æolians ensued. Those who preferred the fat pastures, "the flesh-pots and the garlic," of the Great Plain, and remained behind, paid dearly for their sloth. Henceforth they bore the ignoble name of *Penestæ* = clingers to the soil, laggards behind,<sup>1</sup> and sank into the position of serfs or bondmen to the new Thessalian lords. The same fate gradually overtook all the peoples of the fertile plain of the Peneius. Certain tribes, however, either inhabiting mountain districts not so much to be coveted, or more sturdy in their resistance—the Magnetes, Achæans, Perrhæbi—passed into a state of feudal dependence merely on the Thessalian princes, retaining their own tribal name and vote in the Council of the Pylian Amphictyony.

The tribes known to history as preferring exile to serfdom and dependence were the Æolian Arnæans (the later Bœotians) and the Dorians,<sup>2</sup> and it is a curious fact that with the exodus of these tribes went apparently most of the energy and intellect of the population. The Thessalians of history do not concern us any more than the Epeirotes, as "experimenters." With the Achæan age Thessaly's *Blüthenzeit* is past and over. We therefore leave the lordlings of the plain to their horse-breeding and bull-hunting, their flocks and herds and feasting, their merely sensuous existence, and follow the fortunes of the nobler sort.

### THE ARNÆANS (BŒOTIANS)

Forth then wandered the Arnæans. Although they have been driven out of Thessaly we shall mistake their character if we imagine them to be wanting either in energy or in courage. As the sequel shows (and even O. Müller remarks, as may be gathered from the names given to their dukes or leaders in the *Iliad*), they were a warlike race. Crossing Othrys and Ceta they found their way through the Cephissus valley into the country destined to become known as Bœotia, Land of Oxen, but then called, as we have seen, Cadmeis. Here they settled, first on the west of the Copaic Lake at Charoneia and Coroneia, built in memory of their old home at new Arne (which disappeared later, probably engulfed by a sudden rising of the lake), and founded in honour of their national goddess, Athena Itonia (from Iton, one of the oldest cities of Achæa Phthiotis), a sanctuary, which continued to be the religious centre for all the Bœotian states down to the latest times.

Imitating the tactics which had made themselves exiles, the Bœotians then gradually extended their warlike operations until they were in possession of both plains—the southern with its capital, Thebes, the northern with its once great centre Orchomenus. In historic times we hear no more of Cadmeians, Thracians, Ionians, Pelasgians, or Minyæ in Bœotia. The brave Little Folk were the last to succumb, but at length they too disappeared before the rising power, and fled, as we have seen, to Attica, Peloponnesus, and Thera (p. 141). The other dispossessed peoples, driven from their homes, crossed the sea, and assisted in founding the Æolian Colonies of Asia Minor. Let us point out with Duncker, to the credit of the Æolian Bœotians, that such of the old

<sup>1</sup> So Thirlwall, who regards *Penestæ* as = *Menestæ*, or remaining on the soil. *Penestæ*, however, is generally interpreted as the "Poor Folk."

<sup>2</sup> Here we follow Helbig and Schoemann. The latter says: "As the invasion (of Peloponnesus by the Dorians) is said to have taken place sixty years after the Trojan war, or about 1104 B.C., it seems reasonable to bring it into connection with the immigration of the Thessalians, which had taken place shortly before."



inhabitants of the land as remained were not enslaved. They must have been admitted to the new commonwealths, for in Bœotia there were in historic times neither Penestæ, as in Thessaly, nor Helots, as in Laconia.

The Bœotians, however, remained masters of the situation, and of the mist-hung valleys of the land, where we leave them for a few centuries to develop gradually into Thebans, Plateans, Thespians—in short, the various distinct and independent peoples or “states” met with in history—of whom at one time the little country boasted no fewer than fourteen.

## THE DORIANS

The other noteworthy migration from Thessaly is that of the Dorians, a clan destined to grow into one of the mightiest and strongest races of Hellas, and to leave the imprint of its own resolute character on some of the most important of the experiments of the coming centuries. Like the Little Folk, we find the Dorians in their Thessalian home close neighbours of the Macedonians, for Herodotus tells us that they dwelt about the foot of Olympus and Ceta. As we find, in the extreme north of the plain, three cities (Azoras, Pythion, and Doliche) which formed a special district under the name of Tripolis=land of the three cities, inhabited in historic times by Perrhæbi, we may, having regard to the threefold division customary among the Dorians, not unreasonably conclude this to have been the original seat of the race.

Forced out of their highland home, then, the Dorians settled first in Dryopis, a little valley between Parnassus and Ceta, from which they expelled the ancient inhabitants (who wandered south into Hermione in Peloponnesus), and to which they gave their own name—Doris. This valley, the historic “metropolis” of a famous race, merits for various reasons a passing glance, which need not detain us long.

Ascending from the south, the Plain of Amphissa—whence one narrow pass, formed by the ravines of two torrents, leads over the northern heights of Parnassus—and descending on the other side, where formerly stood the city of Cytinium, the traveller finds himself in a valley, more than three and a half miles in breadth. Crossing this, he climbs the rugged slopes of Ceta, whose oak forests gave to the district, in the oldest days of the olden time, the name of Dryopis=oakland, or woodland. On this, the northern boundary of the valley, he takes his stand. Before him now stretches the majestic range of Parnassus, its multiform summits covered with snow, which often lies till August, its sides deep-trenched by the gullies worn by the winter-torrents, its wooded foot broken into magnificent glens, at once wild and picturesque. Between these two ranges, Ceta and Parnassus, shut in by them on north, west, and south, lies the little valley, opening out on the east into Phocis. Its surface is varied by gentle undulations, and watered by two mountain-streams,<sup>1</sup> which, flowing eastwards, join the Cēphissus, and help to swell the volume that floods the Cōpaic Plain. Such is the woodland valley of Doris, wherein the exiles settled.

The most important consequence of the occupation of the valley by the Dorians is, probably, to be found in the extension and deepening of the cult of Apollo, their national god, at Delphi on Parnassus. The extraordinary

<sup>1</sup> One of these rivers was anciently called Pindus, a name given also to a city of Doris; and to a confusion between these and the great mountain range Bursian refers the statement of Herodotus that, after leaving their first home, the Dorians settled for a time “on Pindus.” (Herodotus, i. 56; Bursian, *op. cit.*, i. p. 153, note 3.)

grandeur of the Parnassian glen, its mysterious clefts and towering heights had, as already described (p. 66), very early marked out Delphi as the home of a mysterious religion. According to Æschylus, the Delphic shrine was first possessed by Gæa (Earth), then by Themis (Law), and Phœbe (Light), before it finally passed to Apollo. Hence the transference of the Parnassian shrine from other deities to Apollo may possibly have been effected by the Dorians. Two facts, at least, point in this direction: (1) that there existed a connection between Thessaly, the early home of the Dorians, and Delphi, and that pilgrimages were made periodically from the latter to the beautiful Tempē-gorge, whence came the laurel of Apollo; (2) that Apollo, although a god of the Greeks universally, was in a very special sense the god of the Dorians; that the Delphic Oracle in historic times guided all their movements, and that the might of the Oracle grew with the increase of the Dorian might. We are, therefore, justified in ascribing the first germ, at least, of an institution which exercised so extraordinary an influence not only in Greece, but far beyond the limits of the little land, to the Dorians, a race whose respect for law and authority was unbounded.

We must hasten on, however, for the Dorians are not fated to remain as an undivided people in the Parnassian valley.

Amongst them, according to tradition, there lived three princely exiles—Temenus, Aristodemus, and Cresphontes—great-grandsons of Hyllus, the son of Heracles and Deianeira. These Heracleids, or descendants of Heracles, were also, as we remember, Perseids, descendants of Perseus, and the rightful heirs (so they averred) to the sovereignty of Argos—a sovereignty usurped by the Pelopids, and now vested in a grandson of Agamemnon, Tisamenus, son of Orestes. And not only had they this claim upon Argos, but Sparta also should have been theirs, by reason of a promise made by Tyndareus, king of the land, to Heracles, who had helped him to regain his throne when dispossessed of it by his brother. And not only could the Heracleids claim Argos and Sparta, but the Messenian dominions of old Nestor of Pylus and the land of Elis were theirs also, by right of the fact that Heracles had made war against and conquered both lands. Thus the Heracleids had a clear and most undeniable right to the best parts of Peloponnesus, according to the sagas.

These exiled Heracleids had been protected by the Dorians on account of the ancient friendship subsisting between Heracles and their king, Ægimius, to whom the hero had rendered valuable services. Accordingly, sixty years after the Trojan war, the Dorians did a generous deed. They left their beautiful valley to avenge the wrongs of these dispossessed princes, and re-instate them in their inheritance. This is what the saga informs us, but physical geography tells a different tale—it says that the Dorians consulted their own best interests in this new movement. The Dorian valley, beautiful as it looks in summer, is a fearful place in winter. It needs no great stretch of imagination to fancy what the depth and intensity of the snows of Parnassus and Ceta must be. In summer the lofty summits of the mountains constantly attract and break the clouds, thus subjecting the district to long and violent storms, whilst in winter the shadows cast by them reduce to a minimum the amount of daylight enjoyed by the inhabitants.<sup>1</sup> The beautiful Dorian valley,

<sup>1</sup> Colonel Leake tells us that all the ancient cities of Doris, and Phocis, and Bœotia, which occupy strong and otherwise advantageous situations under the northern sides of Parnassus and Helicon, experience the same inconvenience—the mountains deprive them of the sun's rays. Thus, in the Bœotian Lebadeia, the sun in winter disappears even from the lowest quarter of the city at 2 P.M.: at Tithorea, in Phocis, at 1 P.M. (*Northern Greece*, ii. p. 119.)



in fact, corresponds in its physical conditions only too closely to those districts among the Swiss-Italian Alps which we associate with cretinism and other evils, and the Dorians showed the strong common sense which always distinguished them in quitting it as soon as possible.

This is evident from the fate of those Dorians that remained behind—a people more different from their fortunate brethren who migrated to the south it is impossible to conceive. The Northern Dorians take no share in experimenting, play no part in history. Shut up among their mountains, cut off from the sea by Cēta and the Malians, they led a miserable existence, and came to be known as the Limodorieis, or Hunger-Dorians.<sup>1</sup>

We are apt at first to attempt to explain this marvellous contrast by throwing overboard the tradition of the blood-connection between the Dorians of Northern Greece and those of Peloponnesus. But an explanation so arbitrary we have no right to make. Even G. Busolt accepts the tradition. "That the march of the Laconian Dorians began from Doris," he says, "must be recognised as an historical fact, because it is recorded by Tyrtæus." Again, it was the little Dorian valley, and not the great Dorian States in Peloponnesus, that possessed the original right to a vote in the Amphictyonic Council. About this there can be no doubt. Moreover, the Peloponnesian Dorians always regarded those of the north as their kinsfolk. They considered themselves as *apoikoi* = away from home, and the woodland valley of Doris as their metropolis, or mother-city; and we know that in after ages, when the little state was harassed by its neighbours, the Phocians and wild mountaineers of Cēta, the Spartans sent once and again to its assistance.

To what, then, must we attribute the contrast between the two branches of the race? Simply to climatic conditions. But is not this to reduce human nature to a very low level indeed?—to suppose that man can deteriorate through the action of outward circumstances is to place him on an equality with a vegetable.

Not so; man, generally speaking, has the remedy in his own hands. He has the power of locomotion towards better hygienic conditions. He can emigrate, as did the Peloponnesian Dorians. If he choose slothfully to stay on in his sorry plight, and neglect Nature's laws, the penalty must be paid—in himself as an individual, and, if all are like-minded with himself in the sum-total of individuals, the race. Nature knows no distinction between a vegetable and a vegetating member of the human species. Centuries spent in a sunless valley, under the conditions which must have obtained in the earliest days of Greece—insufficient supply of food, periodical famines—such causes are quite enough to account in time for the difference between the Northern and the Southern Dorians. We make no apology for pausing to take note of the fact. If the experiments of the Greeks are to be of any use to us in our own experiments, here is one that concerns us.<sup>2</sup>

The historical development of three branches of the Dorian race—the

<sup>1</sup> This name, however, is said by some writers to refer not to the Parnassian Dorians, but to Dorians driven by famine from the Peloponnesus to Rhodes and Cnidus. See Bursian, *op. cit.*, i. p. 154, note 1.

<sup>2</sup> Says an eminent physician of our own day: "Nervous depression, depending upon months of sunlessness—negation of light powerfully lowering nervous tone—is too little regarded as an element of de-vitalisation in England" (Duckworth). Are the influences of the sunlight and pure air sufficiently thought of amongst us? If we realised their power in maintaining the fibre of a people, would the dwelling-houses of our working-classes, the backbone of the nation, be in their present condition? Would we go on erecting for them, from economical reasons, lofty barracks, so high and so close together that each becomes a "mountain" to its neighbour, effectually shutting out the sunlight and the air?

Spartan, Messenian, and Northern Dorians—forms altogether one of the most curious of ethnological phenomena, and deserves to be studied like other phenomena, with an eye to cause and effect.

Returning now to these members of the race who were not content to vegetate in Doris with the oaks of the valley, we can easily see that they had very good reason for trying to better their lot without the fictitious motive assigned by the legend.

Leaving the Dorian valley, then, by the Pass of Cytinium, the natural road to the south, the Dorians arrived at Naupactos, in Locris, on the Corinthian Gulf, one of the earliest starting-points of navigation, as its name shows. Here they were joined by a detachment of Ætolians, who also furnished Oxylus, the "three-eyed" guide of the legend. The expedition then crossed into Peloponnesus by the narrow strait between Rhium and Antirrhium, near Naupactos, which forms the entrance to the Corinthian Gulf. All the details of the route taken are perfectly natural, and probably historical.

According to the legend, Oxylus coveted Elis for himself, and therefore conducted the strangers through Arcadia, in order that they might not see and envy the fertility of the longed-for district. But, as Duncker suggests, the Ætolians probably formed the larger part of the invading hosts, and therefore, as a matter of course, had for their share the fat lands which lay nearest. The Dorians had to go farther, and be content with what they could get. The legend represents them as fighting their way through Arcadia, where they cannot effect a settlement, until the Heracleidæ make a compact with Cypselus, king of the Arcadians of Trapezus and Basilis on the upper Alpheius, which compact is ratified by the marriage of Cresphontes, one of the princes, to the daughter of Cypselus.

Once the Dorians had obtained a footing in Basilis, on the borders of Messenia, it is easy to see how they pushed their way southwards into the Plain of Stenyclarus, where they settled, gradually extending their conquest over the whole of Messenia to Pylus, whence they drove out the descendants of old Nestor, the ruling princes, who fled to Attica.

From Basilis, it was equally easy for the Dorians to penetrate into Laconia by following the course of the Eurotas into the plain of Sparta; but this would have been reached also from Messenia by crossing Taygetus. In any case, in Sparta they settled, gradually subduing the whole of Laconia; whilst a third Dorian band went still farther east, and made the conquest of Argos. Here were the headquarters of Tisamenus (the son of Orestes, and grandson of Agamemnon), who, in virtue of his descent from Menelaus (through his mother, Hermione, the daughter of Menelaus and Helen), reigned, not only over Argos, but over Laconia as well.

With the mythic story that the leaders of this invading expedition were three brothers—Heracleid princes—with the legend of the three altars erected by these Heracleid princes to Zeus, the father of their great ancestor; the three signs vouchsafed; and the casting of lots for the threefold division by which Argos, the special inheritance of the Perseids, fell to Temenus, the eldest Heracleid, Messenia to Cresphontes, and Laconia to the two sons of Aristodemus, who had died by the way—with all this we need not concern ourselves here. We may accept the Doric invasion itself as an historical fact, whilst we throw overboard the mythic accretions which gathered round it, as snow gathers round a snowball. The whole story of the connection of the Dorian leaders with Heracles must have been invented to account for the state of things existing in Peloponnesus in historic times. We simply bring our Dorians into Peloponnesus, and there we leave one section to develop into



historical Spartans in their joyous plain—wide-spreading, *eurychoros*—(what a contrast to the narrow, sunless valley of Parnassus!); another section to settle in the bright and beautiful plains of Messenia; and a third to ensconce themselves in the ancient, safe, soaring Pelasgian Larissa of Argos, whence in the slow course of time they will gradually reduce to subjection the whole plain, to semi-subjection Sicyon, Phlius, Trœzên, Epidaurus, and the island of Ægina.

We say "the slow course of time," for the conquest of the old kingdom of Agamemnon and its dependencies must have been accomplished very gradually, by no means suddenly, as say the sagas. In the first place, the Dorians were vastly inferior in numbers to the settled inhabitants of the land. In the second, the art of besieging and carrying a fortress by storm was not yet known. All that the invaders could do was to encamp before a city, and, by intercepting its supplies, starve it into submission, necessarily a lengthy process. By this plan the Larissa of Argos probably fell. The plain had been allotted, according to the saga, to Temenus; and the point of vantage from which he subdued it, and on which he built a citadel whence to carry on operations, was the low height on the marshy coast, afterwards known as the Temenium.

The grand old fortresses of Mycenæ and Tiryns naturally were able to offer a more successful resistance, and down to the time of the Persian wars they preserved a measure of independence.

Lastly, a fourth detachment of Dorians, under Aletes the Rover, descended upon Corinth, and planting themselves on a height near the coast, the hill of Solygeius, as their Argive brethren had planted themselves on the Temenium, forced the inhabitants to admit them into the city, of which they speedily became masters.

The view from the grand old watch-tower (Ephyra = Acrocorinthus), including as it does the snowy peaks of Parnassus, would next appear to have suggested to the Dorians the desirability of pushing onwards across the isthmus, and so joining their new possessions to the old metropolis in the north. This design they proceeded to put into execution, and marched against Ionia, which at that time extended northwards of the isthmus, from the Corinthian Gulf on the west to the Eubœan Sea on the east, including both Attica and Megaris. Fortunately for our experimenting, however, the Dorians here met with a check, and perceived that they had at last found their match in the Attic Ionians. They were obliged, therefore, to give up the grand scheme, retire from Attica, content themselves with the retention of Megaris, and thenceforward confine themselves within the peninsula.

And what, says the reader, became of the chivalrous Achæans of Homer?

Their *Blüthenzeit*, like that of the Thessalians, was over, though only for a time. They retired, according to one tradition, under Tisamenus, son of Orestes, to the north of Peloponnesus, where they took possession of the narrow coast strip, formerly known as Ægialeia, the coast-land, thenceforward called after them Achaia. From this district they ejected the Ionians, who in their turn joined their cousins by blood in Attica, whence they passed over to help in founding the Ionia of Asia Minor.

The fate of the great masses of the Achæan population of Laconia who would not, or could not, save themselves by voluntary exile, resembled that of the dwellers in the Thessalian plain. Those who submitted quietly to the new régime were allowed to live on in a state of feudal dependence as *periœci* = dwellers, around the Dorian headquarters; they enjoyed personal freedom, but had no political rights. Those who offered a stubborn resistance were reduced to the condition of slaves, the thrice-unhappy Helots, who were supposed by

the ancients to have been originally the inhabitants of Helos, the old fortress in the marshes by the sea at the mouth of the Eurotas.

This condition of things which prevailed in Laconia obtained only in a modified degree in the other Dorian states, where the conquerors seem to have mingled better with the old inhabitants of the land.

Such, in brief, is the story of the "dorising" of Peloponnesus. There still remained Pelasgi in Arcadia, Achæans in Achaia, Minyas in Triphylia, Ætoliæ in Elis, Ionians in Trœzên and elsewhere, Dryopes in Hermione; but Doric customs gradually prevailed more or less throughout the whole peninsula. Thenceforward it was the Doric race chiefly that made the experiments and the history of Peloponnesus.

## THE GREAT MIGRATIONS

The invasion of the Great Plain by the Thessalians gave, as we have seen, the impetus to a widespread displacement of the Greek races. The dispossessed Arneans ejected the Pelasgi, Minyæ, and other peoples from Bœotia, the expelled Dorians thrust out first the Dryopes from Doris, then the Pylans from Messenia, and the Achæans from Laconia and Argos; finally, the Achæans in their turn ejected the Ionians of the coast-land. Nor were the smaller peoples left unaffected by the great wave of change. Epidaurus Trœzên in the south, Magnesia and Phthiotis in the south alike felt its effects. We have asked, What became of the dispossessed peoples, those who could not brook slavery or dependence, those for whom no room could be found on any part of the Old Home? and we have answered the question generally in the statement that they passed over to Asia Minor. Let us now follow the fortunes of the emigrants, of those who went out in the cause of freedom to found a new Hellas across the sea.

First, let us premise that the movement proceeded in three main race-streams—the Æolians going to the north, the Ionians to the middle, the Dorians, last of all, to the south of the western shores of Asia Minor.

1. *The Æolic Migration* is said to have consisted in the first instance of the Achæans driven out of Peloponnesus; but the Achæans, as they wandered north through Bœotia and Thessaly, were joined by bands of the ejected or threatened folk of the latter countries. Descendants of Agamemnon are said to have led the expedition, and it is probable that the emigrants sailed either from Aulis in Bœotia (as the fleet of Agamemnon is said by tradition to have done) or from the Pagasæan Gulf (see p. 134). One detachment conquered the great island of Lesbos, another won the city of Cyme on the mainland, the chief of the Æolic settlements; and by degrees the country rendered famous by the *Iliad*—the Troad, the inland region of Mount Ida and the island of Tenedos—was occupied. Let us just note in passing that these northern settlers included among their number Magnetes and Achæan Phthiotes, peoples, that is, from the land where the germ of the saga of Achilles had sprung up, peoples bordering on the Pagasæan Gulf and Mount Pelion, the scene of the wedding of Peleus and Thetis (p. 142). The Magnetes founded cities called Magnesia, both on Mount Sipylus and on the Mæander; the Phthiotis Achæans settled amongst their Achæan brethren from Peloponnesus. As for the Bœotian emigrants, it is worthy of note that Thucydides calls the people of the islands Lesbos and Tenedos, "relatives of the Bœotians"—a relationship which may be recognised in the dialects. Finally, let us say here,



that the name *Æolian*, "the mixed folk" (*Pape*), first used to designate such of the colonists as were neither Ionians nor Dorians, gradually came to be applied to the people of various districts of the mother-country—Thessaly, Bœotia, &c.—in the same sense.

2. *The Ionic Migration*.—To Attica, "hospitable" Attica, the only Eastern country left undisturbed by invading hosts, fled crowds of refugees—Ionians from the coast-land, from Trœzēn, from Corinth—and Attica received them all. And not only her own kith and kin did she receive with alien races—Minyæ and Pelasgi from Bœotia, Lapithæ from Thessaly, Pylians from Peloponnesus. So far did Attica carry her hospitality, indeed, that she extended to the new-comers the rights of citizenship, as Thucydides tells us, and thereby grew in strength, as well as in numbers. Recent writers—*e.g.* Duncker—infer that Attica knew how to get a return for her hospitality, inasmuch as she set the fugitive Pelasgi to construct for her the great wall round the Acropolis of Athens, the Pelasgicum, part of which remains, like the walls of Tiryns, to this day. We incline, however, to the older and more natural interpretation, which makes the Pelasgicum the work of the original Pelasgian inhabitants of Attica—a work, probably executed on behalf of the new Ionian lords, typified under the name of "Theseus, the Settler."

That the Athenians were not narrow-minded in their reception of the fugitives generally, seems to be proved by the saga which makes a Pylian prince become King of Attica.

The people of Attica, it would seem, were sore pressed by their Bœotian neighbours, who in the first flush of their victory over the old inhabitants of the Land of Kine, thought to cross Cithærōn and make an easy conquest of the wave-beat land as well. Xanthus, the Bœotian leader, challenges Thymætas, the last of the Theseids, to single combat. Too old himself to face the foe, Thymætas promises his kingdom to the hero who shall take his place. Melanthus of Pylus (descended from a brother of old Nestor, the honey-tongued) steps forward, slays Xanthus, and becomes King of Athens. The gist of the story is, of course, the throwing open of the highest office to the best man, no matter what his nationality might prove to be. It is a son of this Melanthus, Codrus, who in that most beautiful old legend defeats the Dorians when, as we have already seen, they are suddenly brought to a standstill, defeats them by the generous sacrifice of himself. We may note here that several of the noble Athenian families were Neleids, *i.e.* traced their descent to the sons of Nestor, the son of Neleus, amongst others the Alcæonidæ and the Peisistratidæ, names well known in the later history of Athens.

Naturally, the barren rocks of Attica could not possibly maintain the increased population, and another wave of migration set in. Under Neleus, one of the sons of Codrus, a mixed multitude departed from—mark!—the Prytaneium or Council Hall of Athens, taking with them fire from the Hestia or sacred hearth of the state. This mixed multitude, therefore—Ionian in the great mass, but mingled with many other elements, Minyæan, Cadmeian, Phœnician, according to Pausanias, Dryopian, Pelasgian, Molossian, and Arcadian, also, according to Herodotus, went forth as children from the mother city, Athens. Hence, when Herodotus tells us that the Ionians of the twelve cities came from Athens, he says what is probably historically true, although the new settlers were, as he himself points out elsewhere, very far from being all natives of Attica, or even Ionians by birth.

As Mr. Grote rightly says, the results were not unworthy of so mighty a confluence. The emigrants peopled the Cyclades, the circling islands of the *Ægæan*, conquered the great islands of Samos and Chios, and founded on the

Asiatic coast ten cities, which rose to be amongst the mightiest in Hellas. These twelve states, Samos and Chios, Miletus, Myus, Priene, Ephesus, Colophon, Lebedus, Teos, Erythræ, Clazomenæ, and Phocæa—formed the Ionian Dodecapolis, or league of the twelve cities, the centre of which was the Panionium, the meeting-place of all the Ionians, the sanctuary of the god of the race, Poseidon Heliconius, on the promontory of Mycale south of Miletus, where common sacrifices were offered, and councils held on occasion of danger.

To the twelve Ionian cities was added another, which has retained power and pre-eminence to the present day. Smyrna, originally an Æolic settlement, seized treacherously by the Ionian exiles from Colophon whom the Smyrnæans had hospitably but unwarily taken into the city. Let us add that notwithstanding the heterogeneous elements of which "Ionia" was composed, the fusion was tolerably complete. The Ionian ascendancy was acknowledged, and the Ionian name prevailed from the Hermus to the Mæander. We shall not, however, be disposed to wonder at the statement of Herodotus that in Ionia no fewer than four different dialects were spoken.

3. *The Doric Migration* took place last of all. The emigrants seem especially to have aimed at securing a footing on the great island of Rhodes, which was already occupied by Carians and Phœnicians. Here they succeeded in founding three cities—Lindus, Cameirus, and Ialysus. These three settlements, with the island of Cos, and two cities on the south-west corner of the mainland, Cnidus and Halicarnassus, formed the Dorian Hexapolis, or union of six states, the centre of which was the temple of Apollo, near the Triopian headland. The Hexapolis was afterwards reduced to a Pentapolis, through the refusal of one of the citizens of Halicarnassus to submit to the rules imposed at the Triopium. All victors, it would seem, were required to consecrate the prize won in the games (a tripod) to the god. This man, however, instead of depositing his meed of honour in the temple, carried it home and hung it up in his own house, whereupon the other five cities shut out Halicarnassus from the union. The story is significant as casting a little sidelight on race characteristics. Halicarnassus was colonised, it is true, by Dorians, but they were Dorians from Trezæn, a state which, as we have seen (p. 149), was originally Ionic, and remained Ionic to the last, spite of its Doric masters. The great mass of the Trezænian emigrants must have been Ionians under Dorian leaders, for the Ionic element prevailed in Halicarnassus. The Ionic dialect was used—the history of Herodotus, a native of Halicarnassus, is written in old Ionic—and Poseidon, the patron-god of the Ionian race, was worshipped beside Apollo, the patron-god of the Dorians. Hence, in the conduct of the man of Halicarnassus—the self-will which led to the disregard of the sacred ordinance of the Apollo temple, and shocked the sentiments of the law-abiding Dorians—we have probably a specimen of the bold, restless, innovating spirit which formed at once an essential feature of the Ionian character, and an ever-present source of danger.

In connection with the Dorian migration must be mentioned in more detail the final wanderings of the Little Folk, already sketched (p. 134). As we have seen, they were expelled from Bœotia, and, according to the saga quoted by Herodotus, from Lemnos also. Suddenly the homeless wanderers make their appearance in Laconia, encamp on Mount Taygetus, and light fires, possibly as signals of distress and of their desire to sit down as suppliants at the great hearth of the state. The Lacedæmonians naturally send to inquire into the cause of the beacon flames; and on hearing that the "descendants of the Argonauts" have arrived in their land, hear also in the news an appeal to their



piety; for the Tyndaridæ, Castor and Pollux, the brothers of Helen, protectors and patron-genii of Laconia, had sailed in the *Argo*, and shared in the great deeds of Jason (p. 135). The Lacedæmonians, therefore, receive the Minyæ kindly, give them land and settled homes. Not content with this, however, the Little Folk remember that they were once free and self-governing, and presently they demand a share in the sovereignty. This is too much for Dorian pride, and the ringleaders of the audacious Little Folk are promptly shut up in prison, to pay the penalty of their presumption with their lives. Their wives, however, as the daughters of Spartan citizens, are allowed to bid them a last farewell—an opportunity which the ladies, true to their Spartan instinct, utilise by changing clothes with their husbands, who escape as women, and again encamp on Mount Taygetus. Here they would have paid dearly for the device, but for the fortunate coincidence that there happens to be among the Spartans a malcontent in high position—one discontented with the existing state of things. This is Theras, the maternal uncle of the two young kings, Eurysthenes and Procles, the sons of Aristodemus (p. 141). He has acted as regent during their minority, and to retire now into private life is more than he can brook. He therefore conceives the brilliant idea of putting himself at the head of an expedition, and founding a new settlement elsewhere. He begs that the Minyæ may be allowed to accompany him, and the powers that be, glad to escape a double peril, consent that Theras shall carry out his project. The greater part of the Minyæ cross Taygetus and conquer their share of Triphylia, land of the Three Tribes (p. 141), and the remainder set sail with Theras, and all who like to join the expedition. They are bound for Calliste, that beautiful isle, submerged by volcanic action, which we know so well (p. 46), which they speedily occupy, reducing its Phœnician population to submission. Calliste takes the name of the ækist or founder of the New Home, and thus Thēra is peopled by the descendants of those ancient voyagers, the Argonauts, by whose instrumentality, according to the saga, she had been called into existence (see p. 135).

We have given the whole story in its fulness, as told by Herodotus, because in its naïve way it illustrates one great factor in the origin of the colonies which sprung up during the period with such amazing rapidity. Not over-population alone can account for this—the colonies were an outlet for bold and turbulent spirits—the discontented energy which would have played havoc at home was happily and profitably utilised in creating a new sphere abroad for itself.

The first great result of the Thessalian invasion was this immense widening of the bounds of Hellas. A second consequence, which flowed naturally from the first, was an absolute break in the development of civilisation and culture on the old lines. We have seen that before the invasion of the Dorians, the people of the eastern coast of Greece had attained to no small degree of refinement and luxury. This is proved not only by the recently discovered palaces, richly decorated and fortified in a way that presupposes the existence of something worth protecting, but by the treasures and other objects found in the pit-graves, the beehive tombs, and rock-chambers of Greece. Further, we have seen that this culture, even although imported, must of necessity have been acclimatised in Greece for several centuries. Lastly, we have seen that it was widespread, that it has left unmistakable evidence of its existence at Amyclæ in Laconia; at Mycenæ, Tiryns, and Nauplia in Argos; at Athens, Spata, and Menidi in Attica; at Orchomenus in Bœotia; and in Thessaly, at Dimini, near Volo, the ancient Iolcus. How comes it, then, that a culture

thus rich and diffused, could have died out to all appearance so utterly that its very existence became a mere tradition?

The answer is to be sought in two different causes: (1) in the fact that those who had been the main supporters of this culture, the princes and nobles of Peloponnesus, left the country; (2) in the character of those who succeeded them in the direction of affairs. Think what the Dorian Spartans—the best type of the Doric race—were, as we know them in historic times, dwelling in an open, unfortified city, and in houses with roofs and doors constructed only by the aid of the axe and the saw—that is, with no attempt at ornamentation, despising all luxury as effeminacy, forbidding the use of gold. Think of the Ætoliæ of the north as we know them also in history at the time of the Peloponnesian wars—robbers and brigands, speaking a non-understandable tongue, feeding on raw flesh. Were these the type of conquerors likely to foster art and industry, and appreciate the beginnings already made? Nay! before we know Dorians, centuries of prosperity had helped to mould and soften them; but at the time of the invasion we can only picture them as mountaineers, noble in their nature indeed, but as regards manners and customs, very much on a level with the Græco-Aryans, whom we saw defiling through the gorge of Tempē with arrows and battle-axe of stone. Helbig, we venture to think, is not far wrong when he sees in the Spartan mode of life certain “survivals” of the old Aryan habits. The famous “black soup” and the primitive dress of the Spartan maidens may alike have travelled to the valley of the Eurotas from the old Aryan home.

According to the same authority, the immense difference between the Mycenæan and the Hellenic art is explainable only by some historic event which interrupted the progress of development on the old lines. That event is the Dorian invasion. The very western situation of Dorians and Ætoliæ in their old homes, forces us to the conclusion that they stood on a primitive basis of culture—a basis not affected by influences from beyond seas; and let us note that the excavations at Olympia confirm this. They show nothing that can be compared with the Mycenæan treasures,—“much rather do the oldest finds hitherto made there point to a later epoch.” The western side of Greece lagged far behind the eastern—Dorian supremacy was at the first hurtful to eastern refinement. Thus, in the mother-country, the progress of Art and Industry was interrupted everywhere except in Attica, and even there it languished, for the influences of the East were almost entirely banished. The Phœnicians have now been driven not only from the mainland, but out of the islands. The Greeks are thrown back upon their own resources—the withdrawal of foreign models and types forced them to look at home—a blessing in disguise, for by-and-by Greek art, true Hellenic art, will emerge like a Phoenix from the ashes of the old Mycenæan borrowed art. The one must die before the other can be born.

But how about the emigrants, those who sought a home in New Hellas? Did they take the Mycenæan culture with them? Undoubtedly, but in the struggle to win New Hellas, the Mycenæan culture received a rude shock. Think of the peoples of Asia Minor, as we have learned to know them—Phrygians, Lycians, Carians—one and all on an equality with the Greeks as regards arms, equipment, and warlike capacity. Can we imagine them giving up that “blessed land,” as it has been called, on the Ægæan coast and its four great fertile river-valleys, without a struggle? Nay, the New Homes were won sword in hand, the contest must have been severe and protracted, extending over long years. Under such circumstances, luxury sinks into the background, and hence it is that when we meet with the old civilisation again in



the pages of Homer, it is incomparably simpler than when we last saw it in the pit-graves of Mycenæ. "Prunk" and ostentatious show have disappeared.

The earliest history of the colonies on the west coast of Asia Minor is scanty and confused; one fact, however, stands out with startling prominence, viz.: the rapidity with which the new settlements caught up and surpassed the mother-country. Many factors conduced to this result; one of these has been active over and over again in our own modern experience of colony-founding. Circumstances which place all on a common level of necessity are not only sharp spurs and goads to invention, but they tend to bring forward the best men. The clear-headed man of resource, the man of tact and judgment, the man of staying power, the man to whom his comrades naturally turn at a pinch, becomes the real leader of the party, even although the man of birth and breeding may nominally hold the reins. *La carrière ouverte aux talents!* is one clue to the success of New Hellas—one reason why she outstripped for a time the old country.

Another clue is, however, to be found in the nature of the land on which the colonists had settled. Midway between three continents and three great seas, the peninsula of Asia Minor had, long before the advent of the Greeks, been, as it were, a focus of the older civilisations or meeting-place of many races. We have already had evidence of the way in which the country had been opened up from very early times (p. 178), of the roads which intersected it, affording facilities of intercourse between the old imperial centres and the sea-board of the Ægean. On the peninsula met all races—Turanian, Semitic, Aryan—each contributing its quota to the common stock and the point of attraction for all—the point to which all naturally gravitated—was the western sea-coast.

Imagine now our restless moving coast-folk, our people possessed of unlimited "go" (Ionians), energy, and resource, suddenly placed in this unrivalled position, forced by dire necessity to work at the highest pressure, and we shall have no difficulty in understanding how they became one of the greatest motor-powers the world has ever seen; we shall understand also how the energy spent itself—literally burnt itself out—and made way, finally, for the "steady-going," slow old mother-country to come to the front.

Some writers have attributed in great measure the astonishing development of the Ionian states to the transplanting of the race to a southern climate. Thus, Schömann compares it to the forcing of a hot-house plant. Certainly, we have the testimony of Herodotus that the Ionians had "the finest sky and climate of the world"—but so had the mother-country; and, as a matter of fact, it has been proved that it is a little colder on the littoral of Asia Minor than in the ports situated on the directly opposite coasts of Greece. The climate of Asia Minor is modified not only by the islands strewn before the coast, but by the remarkable contour of the latter. The Ionians of Ægialeia must have felt quite at home on the Asiatic coast, for it is split up on a large scale by manifold arms of the sea, bays, and gulfs, precisely as is, on a smaller scale, the land they had left. Naturally, such a configuration of the land affects the climate. On the coast of Asia Minor, local causes break up a thousand-fold the atmospheric currents; every headland, every strait has its wind specially feared by the mariner, and the sudden alternations of temperature are such that the vegetation is not, as we should expect, sub-tropical.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Palms are first met with at Patmos, hence the modern name of the island, *Palmosa*" (*Reclus*).

Thus in the New as in the Old Home, *work* was the law for the Greek—the only difference being that he came to the work of the New Home with matured powers, and pursued it under intensely stimulating conditions.

Among these stimulating conditions must undoubtedly be placed the effects of natural phenomena and of scenery. All that we have said on this head in regard to the mother-country applies with equal, or even greater, force to the coast-land on the opposite side of the Ægean. Separated by the waves, the countries are really one—the same broken, enormously extended coast-line, the same clear blue sky and foam-crested sea; the same alternation of hill and dale; the same volcanic fissures, the same mysteriously disappearing rivers<sup>1</sup> are characteristic of both. Life, change, brightness are the prevailing features of the landscape.

We must, however, pass on more rapidly. The blessed land with its fertile river-valleys—the valleys of Caicus, the Hermus, the Cayster, and the Mæander—did not content the colonists. Soon the seas to the east and the west were explored. Miletus led the way in exploring the dreaded Axenus, “the Inhospitable Sea,” and changing it into a Euxine, “Sea of Welcome”; round its shores and those of the Propontis, she herself planted no fewer than eighty daughter-cities. The other colonies—Æolic and Doric—were equally possessed by the colonising spirit. The mother-country was likewise forced on by the causes which had led to the great migrations, and so by degrees there sprang up a blooming wreath of Greek cities, not only round the Ægean and the Black Seas, on the coasts of Thrace and Macedonia, but, very early, in the great islands of the Mediterranean, Crete, and Sicily, round the shores of North Africa and South Italy (Magna Græcia), extending as far as the Ligurian coast and Massilia (Marseilles).

Let us note that in many of these countries, notably on the islands, the Greeks had to fight not only against the natives, but against the Phœnician settlers who had preceded them. The fact that at this time the Phœnicians were themselves hard pressed at home by the Assyrians, and could not send help to their colonies, undoubtedly made the progress of the Greeks easier than would otherwise have been the case.

If we add, now, to this grand extension to east and west, the final opening up of Egypt to the Greeks, we shall see that we have entered upon an entirely new epoch.

It was when the Greeks came face to face with the “barbarian” in the wider sense, that the need for a common name forced itself upon them. “Achæan” no longer lived as a national designation, save in the pages of Homer. “Æolian,” “Ionian,” “Dorian,” were each and all too narrow—the extension of any one of these to denote the whole was simply impossible. Putting aside race-jealousies, race-differences remained—the Dorian was not an Ionian—the Ionian could never be a Dorian. And yet, race-resemblances were stronger still—the Dorian felt himself kin to the Ionian, the Ionian to the Dorian, but between both and the barbarian a great gulf was fixed. Those who were of the same blood, spoke the same tongue, offered sacrifices in common to the same gods, these were of the same race, these were *brothers*. How,

<sup>1</sup> The Mæander has hardly risen when it disappears into a fissure in the limestone rock; it goes through the same manœuvre a second time; then enters a vast plain through which it *meanders* (makes the tours and detours which have rendered its name proverbial), almost covered by reeds, the reeds which told the secret of Midas and his ass's ears. Leaving the plain, it flows between gorges, and then into a magnificent champaign, which stretches, but for short rocky intervals, to the sea. At the mouth of this great river lay Miletus, the mother of many daughter-cities (*Reclus*).



then, should this sacred tie be represented? How expressed? The poets found the answer. They remembered the old story of Deucalion, the Noah of Greek tradition (see *ante*, p. 142). They recalled his son, *Hellen*, and they gave him to be the eponymous ancestor of all Greeks. Æolians, Ionians, Dorians were all content to be numbered together as brethren under the beautiful name of Hellenes, Children of Light.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Connected with *selas*=brightness, *selēnē*, and derived from the root *svar*=bright, shining (*G. Curtius*). Others associate it with *sella*, *hella*=*hedos*=seat. The term is first used as a collective name for the Greeks in Archilochus and the Hesiodic Catalogue (about 600 B.C.). In the sixth century it was quite common.

## § IV.—RELIGION

### INTRODUCTION

TURNING now to that second main factor which goes to the building up of a people—its belief or beliefs as to the Unseen—and reverting to our preliminary inquiry into the special characteristics of the Greeks as a people (p. 64), it will be remembered that foremost amongst these characteristics this feature presented itself, viz.: that the Hellenes were an intensely “religious” people—a statement which, even at the present day, will not pass unchallenged in certain quarters.

That the religion of the Greeks was one which drew its inspiration, not from the Father of lights, but from the enemies of all good—is a proposition which, sheltering itself beneath the venerable ægis of Milton, has struck deep root in the national mind: “Say what you will about the beauty of the Greek language and literature and art”—(so runs the under-current)—“but don’t talk to us about *religion* in connection with these old pagans, or of *faith* in connection with their deities. The idea is preposterous.”

Is it? Perhaps, my reader, we are looking at different sides of the shield. Let us call an independent witness, an eye-witness, a contemporary of these same “old pagans,” one who knew the Hellenes, not, indeed, in their vigorous prime, but at a time when, although conquered politically, they were still the intellectual leaders of the world. This witness, who knew these “old pagans” in the flesh, shall decide between us, and you will accept his testimony, for he believed in the one God with an earnestness which perhaps equals your own.

Well, some 1850 years ago, this witness landed at one of the ports of Athens. He was alone, but he was not solitary, for he was a man of cultivation, and, for the first time in his life, he found himself in the great centre of culture—“the metropolis of wisdom”—the home of art and science, the city whose language and customs had become, as we have seen, the standard for all civilised nations. Therefore, he had in abundance food for reflection as he wended his way through the crowded thoroughfares and made his mental notes.

Everything connected with religion possessed for our witness a special interest, but, even had this not been the case, his attention must have been drawn to the subject at the outset by what he saw around him. Probably among the first objects that caught his eye on landing would be the temples of Artemis Munychia and the Thracian goddess Bendis, conspicuous on the hill of Munychia, the acropolis of the Peiræan peninsula, round which lay the harbours of Athens. In the chief port itself, amid surroundings which bore witness to the activity, naval and commercial, of bygone days, he would find testimony again that, in all the bustle incident to a great emporium, religion was not thrust aside. Temples and shrines there were not a few: a sanctuary of Aphrodite Euploia, “giver of good voyages,” and an open colonnade-surrounded space sacred to Zeus and Athena, “the Preservers,” wherein the seafaring folk and merchants were wont to offer sacrifice after their return home for delivery from the perils of the deep.



By whichever way again our witness may have entered Athens—whether from Phalerum, or, as is more probable, from the Peiræus by the road between the remnants of the Long Walls shattered by Sulla, the route taken some fifty years later by Pausanias—in either case the religious element in the character of the people amongst whom he had landed must have forced itself at once by outward signs upon his notice.<sup>1</sup>

Arrived in the city itself, these signs multiply beyond our present power of rehearsal. There in the Agora, the great market-place (into which a broad street running from the Peiraic Gate would directly bring the traveller), rises the Altar of the Twelve Gods, the visible symbol from which old-world currents of religious thought diverged, and the central point from which distances were measured. Round the Agora are magnificent buildings, detached, each one representing in the time of the independence of Athens, a thought, an idea. The *Stoa Basileus*, or royal hall, which would be the first, in all probability, to meet our witness's eye, was devoted to the interests of public worship and law, and in it the King Archon held his court; on its walls were, not paintings, but the laws of the ancient Athenian legislators, Draco and Solon. Near the *Stoa Basileus* (probably opposite to it) was another *Stoa*, known by the name of the deity whose statue and altar stood before it, Zeus Eleutherius, "the Giver of Freedom"; on its walls had hung (until robbed of them by Sulla) the shields of brave Athenians, consecrated by their wearers to the god of freedom. On the northern side of the Agora (the largest and most beautiful of the halls) was the *Pœcile*, or painted *Stoa*, representative of art, for its walls were adorned with famous paintings by the hand of Polygnotus and others, emblematic also of victory, for these paintings depicted triumphs—the legendary capture of Troy and defeat of the Amazons, and the very real struggle at Marathon. Not far from the *Stoa* of Zeus lay the ancient temple of Apollo Patrôus, the tribal god of the Ionians, and symbol of Athenian citizenship.<sup>2</sup> Next came three buildings associated with the political history of the city—the *Bouleuterium*, or senate house, where the Council of Five Hundred met for deliberation, and which had its altar of Hestia, "symbol of unity,"<sup>3</sup> and statues of Zeus and Athena, "Givers of Counsel," and to Demos, "the Sovereign People"; the *Tholus*, or round house, which was destined for the daily sacrifice, as well as the daily dining together of the Prytanes, or presidents; lastly, the *Metroum*, or Temple of the Mother of the Gods, to whose sacredness was entrusted the preservation of the national records and civic archives.

Thus, the old market-place of Athens is encircled by a cordon of great ideas—religion, art, freedom, citizenship, rights of the people, and unity. Patriotism is exemplified in the statues of Harmodius and Aristogeiton, standing apart in a place of honour in the Orchestra, a semicircular space reserved for the festival choirs; the fatherland by the statues of the Eponymi, or heroes, whose names had been given to the ten tribes of Athens; eloquence is represented by the statue of Demosthenes; poetry by that of Pindar; philosophy has frequented the hall of Zeus in the person of Socrates; and the *Stoa Pœcile* in that of Zeno. Peace, with Wealth as a child in her arms, is also to be found here, and here also are altars in honour of Mercy and of Energy.

<sup>1</sup> The description which follows is based on Bursian, *op. cit.* i. pp. 268, *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> To this temple Athenian boys were brought on being enrolled in their respective phratries.

<sup>3</sup> The national hearth of Hestia, however, on which perpetual fire burned, was in the older Prytaneium, or town hall, to the north of the Acropolis.

Leaving the Agora on the east, the traveller would arrive at the Acropolis, or citadel hill, the very heart and kernel of Athens.

It is defended and approached on its only accessible side, the western, by the Propylæa, the most magnificent entrance-gates in the world (Wordsworth, *Athens and Attica*, pp. 93, *et seq.*, 3rd ed.).

With mingled feelings, indeed, must our traveller have gazed on the Propylæa, since all their magnificence is intended for the honour of the goddess whose superb temples and colossal figure tower on the hill above. Yea, the very character of this goddess must have been to our witness a strange puzzle. Here is no debasing, degrading cult—this goddess is no Ashtaroth of Sidon, no Mylitta of Babylon. All that surrounds Athena the maiden, Athena the fighter-in-front, Athena the guardian of the city, Athena the worker, is grave, earnest, dignified.

Passing the beautiful little temple dedicated to her as Victory, the traveller would arrive at the immense theatre, hewn out of the hillside, with its seats for thirty thousand spectators, and he would also observe in the immediate vicinity the two temples of the god in whose service dramatic performances had originated, and in whose honour they were continued—Dionysus.<sup>1</sup> Passing on, still to the east, the next great object to attract his notice would be the Olympieum, or Temple of Olympian Zeus. Begun by Peisistratus centuries ago, the building is still incomplete; but the magnificence of its proportions bears witness to the ideas entertained as to the honour due to the father of gods and of men.

Such were some of the sights that would engage the attention of a stranger in Athens in the first century of our era. It would detain us too long were we to attempt to particularise the other objects that would meet his gaze—the numerous sanctuaries, the Theseum, shrine of the national hero, rising on the hillside north of the Agora with a dainty grace, “as tho’ formed by fairy hands”; the Outer Cerameicus, with the splendid tombs and monuments of those among her sons whom Athens had delighted to honour; the Pnyx, the assembly-hill of the once sovereign Athenian people, with the bema of its orators; the haunts of philosophers—the Academy of Plato, despoiled, alas! of its groves by Sulla—the Lyceum of Aristotle—all these sights, and very many more, our witness must have seen.

That he saw them in the same way in which such sights were seen half a century later by a Pausanias, that he took note of each in the spirit of an antiquary or of an artist, we cannot for a moment suppose. Not only was his mind pre-occupied, filled with his own mission, but that very mission, by its claims, put him out of sympathy with much that he saw. The united effect of the whole pressed in upon him; what he beheld of exquisite form and beauty moved him, but the thought that underlay it all moved him more deeply still. “And when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry,” his spirit was stirred within him, and day by day he went, with that hidden fire in his breast, to the place where most of all the Athenians loved to congregate—the Agora. And there he stood in that busy centre of the intellectual world’s metropolis, with its knots of buyers and sellers, each frequenting its own special *kyklos* or circle; its loungers, whiling away time in gossiping under the shady plane trees; its debaters and philosophers, slowly promenading up and down the adjacent colonnades, the hall of Zeus Eleutherius, or the painted Stoa; its worshippers on their way to neighbouring sanctuaries, for, strange as it may seem, did not the Athenians still worship a god of the Zealous?

<sup>1</sup> See the article “Dionysus” in *Hellas*.



(Paus. i. 24). There stood the stranger, and as he looked at the Altar of the Twelve Gods, the fire within burned, and he spake to the passers-by, to all who would listen to him. And by-and-by he finds an audience. Marketers pause on their errands, the loungers prick up their ears—here is something new at last!—and the philosophers come scornfully out of their halls to hear what this curious “picker-up of seeds” has to say. And when they discover that they have no “picker-up” but a “sower” of seeds to deal with, that his seeds cast some strange ideas into their minds, their curiosity grows, and they lead him to a quiet corner where the matter may be discussed at leisure.

Strange place to which they take him! It is the low hill overlooking the Agora, the hill that seems to “crawl like a huge monster” towards the Acropolis. The hill whereon, in bygone days (so ran the legend), the gods themselves had held the first court of justice, for the trial of Ares, one of their own number; whereon, too, Athena had pleaded the cause of Orestes against the Furies, of Mercy against the Avengers of Blood (Paus. i. 25); whereon, in later days, the highest tribunal of Athens held its sittings under the watchful eye of these same avengers of blood, accuser and accused stood face to face, and causes of life and death were tried.

Up the rock-hewn steps the stranger is led, and placed in the midst of the crowd on Areopagus, the hill of Ares. Before him is the Acropolis-rock, its magnificent Propylæa and crown of temples glittering in the sunshine, the colossal helmeted figure of Athena Promachos, “the fighter,” in front, the champion of Athens, spear in hand, towering above. Beneath him is the gloomy shrine of the avenging guardians of Areopagus, the Eumenidæ (the well-meaning goddesses), whose real name no Athenian durst pronounce aloud. Here stood our witness, PAUL THE AMBASSADOR, the courageous Apostle of the Hellenes, and spake winged words—words which have sped their flight down the centuries, and have their significance for us as well as for those to whom they were first addressed.

What, then, does he say? He has been some time in Athens; he has seen with his eyes the degenerate present and the past of Athenian life; he has thought, prayed, and pondered over it. He has, as he implies, formed a theory about the whole matter. What, then, does he say in his first recorded public utterance? “Ye pagans, ye idol-worshippers, ye utterly-devoid-of-religion Gentiles!” If he does not, it is not because he knows that (despite the scornful indifference of the majority) there are those among his hearers whose interests are bound up with the preservation of the existing state of things, that any incautious words might lead to his being thrown over the rock. No! Paul the Apostle is not the man to care for considerations of the kind. That he addresses them in another way is the outcome of his ponderings, of his “theorising.” “Ye men of Athens,” he says, in the most gentle, courteous manner, “I perceive that in all things ye are God-fearing;” literally, “I can see with the eye of the mind (*theoro*) that in all things ye are *more* God-fearing (*deisidaimonesterous*), i.e. than other peoples.” In all things—civic life, art, amusements even—your zeal for religion doth appear.

Let us just note how admirably adapted is the expression *deisidaimon*, used by St. Paul, to meet the facts of the case. The word has two meanings. It signifies fear in a good sense, a pious, manly reverence of the Higher Powers, our own “God-fearing,” and in this way it is used by Aristotle and Xenophon; it also means fear that has degenerated into cowardice, servile fear, our “superstitious,” and in this sense it is used in his characters by Theophrastus.

In which sense does St. Paul use the word? Undoubtedly in its honourable sense. He acknowledges that there is a noble element in their religion, the

zeal for God; but the second sense is also extremely applicable to them—the Athenians are at once religious and superstitious—and he does not hesitate to tell them that they have perverted and misdirected this noble element. Nevertheless, it is on this element of their character that he proceeds to found his great argument. He reminds them of the altar “to the Unknown God,” which he had seen, and he goes on to associate with it the very work which had been entrusted to them as a people. God, he says, had “determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation”—to what end? in order “that they should SEEK THE LORD, if haply they might feel after Him and find Him.”

This was the explanation of the history of the Hellenes, the key to that mingling of good and evil which presented a problem so sorrowful and so puzzling to the Apostle as he went his way thoughtfully (theorising,<sup>1</sup> trying to look beneath the surface) through the streets of Athens. When this conviction or revelation dawned upon him, what a ray of light it flashed back upon the centuries! All that was good and noble in the development of the Hellenes—in the history of mankind—had sprung from this “seeking after God,” of Him who is true and noble; all that was base and ignoble from the swerving aside from this quest.

Very many are the attempts which have been made to account for the strange phenomena of what we call “religion”—belief in the Unseen—and its inseparable follower in early days, mythology. The “origin” of religion has been sought for in every conceivable source, material, sensuous, intellectual, spiritual; but not one theory out of the many propounded offers an adequate explanation of two facts which stare us in the face, viz.: (1) that in all ages men have been believers in the Unseen; and (2) that the Unseen has exercised over their lives an influence far transcending that of the seen, the visible.<sup>2</sup>

Just as in no laboratory, chemical or physiological, has yet been solved the mystery of physical life, of that which gives energy to the physical forces, so by no system, material, psychical, or philosophical, has been solved the still greater mystery of spiritual life, of that which gives energy to the spiritual forces. The first appearance of the one upon the earth is as mysterious, as inexplicable, as the appearance of the other. The only solution of either is—the great First Cause. He who gave to man a reasonable soul and human flesh gave the initial life to both. As we all know, there are those who say that to postulate the law of a “primal revelation” of God is to start on the inquiry into the history of religion with “self-created difficulties.”

There is a little flaw in the reasoning here—it is not the “primal revelation” which creates the difficulties, but what we choose to read into the primal revelation. To assume that primitive man started with a full and complex revelation of God in all His attributes—His Wisdom, Justice, Holiness—is indeed to surround ourselves with difficulties which are perfectly insuperable. The history of the ages, the common experience of mankind, the testimony of

<sup>1</sup> For the extreme significance of *theorein* see *ante*, p. 117. The word is used three times in connection with St. Paul's reflections: (1) Acts xvii. 16, *theorounti*=observing the idolatry of the city; (2) v. 22, *theoro*=as a result of my observations I perceive that you are very God-fearing; (3) v. 23, *anatheoron*=as I meditated again and again on your *sebasmata*=objects of worship, i.e. temples, altars, images.

<sup>2</sup> A *résumé* of these various attempts has recently been put forth by O. Gruppe, in his work *Die Griechischen Culten und Mythen in ihren Beziehungen zu den Orientalischen Religionen*. With the ulterior aim of this book we have no sympathy; but the ability of the writer is beyond question. With the utmost fairness and impartiality he passes each system in review, and shows both its strength and its weakness.



nature, will set themselves in array against us, and demand our warrant for the assumption. Everywhere we see the Perfect slowly evolving out of the less perfect or the imperfect: the dawn preceding the day; the acorn sending forth the shoot, the shoot growing into the sapling, the sapling into the oak; the babe developing into the child, the child into the youth, the youth into the man. The same law meets us in the history of nations, we see them passing from the rudenesses, the harshnesses of primitive life, step by step, stage by stage, into the gentler conditions of civilisation. So in the spiritual life. The same law is laid down by the MASTER as the law of His kingdom, whether in a single soul or in that aggregate of souls, which we call a church or a nation: "First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear."<sup>1</sup>

To imagine, therefore, the primal revelation to have consisted in the full knowledge of God as HE is, is to postulate an impossibility, to reverse the course of Nature and of Providence, to set ourselves against the order of the universe—the Divine Law of Progress.

"Ah!" perhaps you will say; "but Revelation tells us that man was made in the image of God—that implies perfection at the outset."

Undoubtedly! perfection in the same way that the little green bud encloses the perfection of the rose, the insignificant acorn that of the oak; man had within him from the first perfection—latent. As made in the image of God, he possessed godlike capacities and aspirations; but the "perfection" had to grow—first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.

A careful consideration of the passage referred to, "Let us make man in our *image*, after our *likeness*" (Gen. i. 26), will help us here. The question whether, "in the great *fiat* announcing man's original constitution," anything different was intended by the use of the two words "image" and "likeness" (rendered respectively *eikon* and *homoiosis* in the Septuagint) has often been discussed. What we have seen of the extreme significance of synonyms, and the careful employment of them by the sacred writers to express different shades of meaning, will have prepared us to pause and ask, "Have we here a real distinction, or is the one word merely used to strengthen the other?" Archbishop Trench (*Synonyms*, p. 52, 11th ed.) reminds us that Gregory of Nyssa devoted a whole treatise to the examination of the question, and that he, with many of the early Fathers, affirmed a real distinction: "The great Alexandrian theologians taught that the *eikon* (the 'image' of God) was something *in* which men were created, being common to all, and continuing to man as much after the Fall as before (Gen. ix. 6); while the *homoiosis* (the 'likeness' of God) was something *toward* which man was created, that he might strive after and attain it."

What then was this "primal revelation" of God to man—this little spark of light which was to guide them in the upward-looking? That we cannot say. Most certainly it was one perfectly adapted to the capacity of the first of our race—most probably it may have consisted in three ideas: (1) that man had a great unseen Father; (2) that this unseen Father loved justice; and (3) that He hated injustice and would punish it. So much perhaps we may postulate—bearing in mind that "justice" and "injustice" were ideas which, equally with the knowledge of God, had to grow and develop.

Let us note, again, that this very limitation of knowledge is implied in the word used by St. Paul. The nations were "to seek the Lord if haply they might *feel after* Him and find Him." The word rendered "feel after"—*psêlaphêseian*—is used by Plato to denote a groping in the dark (*Phædo*, 99B), and in the Septuagint it is applied to the "feeling" of Jacob by his father

<sup>1</sup> St. Mark iv. 28.

Isaac in order to find out whether he were his very son Esau or not.<sup>1</sup> Hence the word, while it implies a state of darkness, implies also earnestness, that tentative spirit and concentration of effort which the blind bring to bear on what they have in hand. This was the discipline which the Great Father imposed upon His children, and as we have seen, it was a discipline calculated to bring out the noblest energies of their nature.

If we will but take the trouble to think it out, we shall see that the development of the Great Idea of God carries within itself the development of all other noble ideas. "In order to understand God," as has been well said, "not one, but all the powers of our nature are necessary" (Hartung, *Religion der Römer*, i. p. 4). We shall see joyfully with Schleiermacher and his disciple, Max Müller, that the sense of God was quickened in primitive man by a presentiment of the Infinite—that in gazing on the glories of the dawn, he may have been led to picture to himself the "golden sea" beyond, and so to apprehend the Divine behind the things of sense (Schleiermacher, *Letters on Religion*, pp. 213, 73, 61; Max Müller, *Origin of Religion*, p. 32, Germ. ed.). We shall see again, with Schleiermacher and another disciple, Otto Pfeiderer, that man was impelled to seek for God by his own craving for the Beautiful, for a harmony which should bring unity into the jarring discords of human life. We shall also be perfectly at one with Burnouf and Peschel in this, that the seeking for God is also a seeking for Knowledge, a longing to penetrate into the mystery of the hidden First Cause in the phenomena of nature (*Jahrb. f. Pr. Theol.*; Burnouf, *Science des Religions*, p. 207). We shall agree again with von Hellwald that man, seeing around him in nature a ladder, as it were, a graduated scale of organisms and intelligences, must needs go on to think out for himself, above and beyond all that he sees, a Perfection which cannot be surpassed—(*Culturgeschichte*. i<sup>8</sup>. p. 34). Finally, we shall, with Kant, be very sure that the seeking after God implies the listening for the Voice of God within—the claims of Conscience and of Duty (*Met. of Ethics*).

In each and all of these—although not one of them is sufficient of itself to originate the Idea of God—we have a spiritual lever of the very highest order. The presentiment of infinity, of immortality—the yearning for beauty and harmony—the endeavour to seek out the great First Cause—the striving towards the Ideal Perfection—the recognition of the imperativeness of Duty: all these intuitions, aims, and efforts are summed up in the simple words "seeking—feeling after God," and it is surely in the pressing towards these, dimly and darkly, that the true greatness of a people consists?

"Tis not what man does which  
Exalts him, but what man would do!"

and in so far as the peoples of antiquity were faithful to the Divine purpose concerning them, precisely in so far did they reach true greatness.

"This seeking after God," says Nägelsbach (xiv.), "is the living pulse-beat in the religious development of antiquity." These are noble words; but we may go further still, and see with St. Paul that this great seeking was designed to be the very MOTIVE-POWER of the peoples,—that which was to raise them above the level of the beasts which perish—that which should give the impetus to every great achievement.

As a simple matter of fact, in the case of the Hellenes the seeking after God was the motive-power in their grandest achievements: hymns to the divine powers were their first attempts at poetry; images which should portray the unseen deities, their first efforts in sculpture; sanctuaries, which

<sup>1</sup> Gen. xxvii. 12, 21, 22.



by their beauty might tempt the gods to sojourn with them, their first grand experiments in architecture. Their science had its roots in religion, for it was in measurements for the building of altars that geometry took its rise, in the awestruck, reverential observation of Nature that natural science sprang up. Their philosophy itself was built upon the Pythagorean doctrine that man is destined to be an image of God; their highest perception of Beauty culminated in the Idea of God.

One more thought from St. Paul's grand speech. He says that although the nations had for their discipline this "feeling" after God—yet that God was not far from any one of them. In Him they lived and moved and had their being. Is this our idea of the old world? On the contrary, we often hear it said that the Hellenes are *the* great example of what a nation can do by its own efforts—the efforts, that is, of "unassisted" nature. In the sense that the Hellenes were "unassisted," like the Jews, by a full revelation, the remark is, of course, true—not otherwise. To suppose that *no* divine help was vouchsafed to them—that the Hebrews alone enjoyed light—the Hellenes sat in utter darkness, what is this but to degrade our God into the tribal God of one race, to shut out the ruler of the world from the immense majority of His own creatures—nay, to accuse Him of the most astounding heartlessness? Can we conceive of the great Father—Eternal Love—deliberately assigning to His children the task of seeking Himself, and then hiding Himself from them, paying not the smallest heed to their efforts? Far from us be so unworthy a thought! If it was His good pleasure that the knowledge of Himself should be gained—so far as man could gain it—by effort, we may be very sure that He took an exceeding interest in that effort; that whatsoever things of beauty, whatsoever things of truth, whatsoever things of good report among us to this day were "evolved" in it and by it, were first "inspired" by Him. The Hellenes themselves shall be His witnesses.

Our inquiry, then, into this great experiment—the quest for God! truly, the grandest and noblest in all history—resolves itself into this: How far did the Hellenes succeed in finding God?

**The Basis of the Experiment.**—"When we go back to the highest antiquity of Greece," says Welcker (i. 129), "the greatest fact that meets us is the idea of God as the Supreme Being, associated with a worship of Nature, which never wholly disappeared, but out of which there early began to develop a family of gods, sprung from Zeus (the supreme god) and outside of nature."

We have thus as the basis of the Greek religion three great ideas:—

- (1) Worship of the highest God as the Supreme Being;
- (2) Worship of gods—the powers of Nature;
- (3) Later, God and the gods united into a family.

"Of these three," continues Welcker, "one seems so entirely to exclude the others that (perhaps on this account only) the first and the second have been less known and considered than the third, which predominated in the course of times better known."

These three root-ideas, like the roots and framework of the language, were brought to Greece by the Greek Aryans from their original home.

The very oldest authority for the knowledge of the Greek religion is Homer; but there is an Aryan book in existence much older than Homer, and that is, as we know, the *Veda* of the Hindus. In the *Rig-Veda* (the "Song of Knowledge"), the oldest of the Vedic collections, we can examine for ourselves, if not the beginnings, at least an earlier stage of this religion which all the members of the Aryan family—Hindus, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Teutons, Celts, and Slavs—carried away with them to their historic homes.

"In the history of the world," says Professor Max Müller (*Sansc. Lit.*, 63), "the *Veda* fills a gap which no literary work in any other language could fill. It carries us back to times of which we have no records anywhere, and gives us the very words of a generation of men of whom otherwise we could form but the vaguest estimate by means of conjectures and inferences. As long as man continues to take an interest in the history of his race . . . the first place in that long row of books which contains the records of the Aryan branch of mankind will belong for ever to the *Rig-Veda*."

Nevertheless, as stated, the *Veda* does not take us back to the beginning. Chronologically, it is impossible to place its earliest songs; they may belong to the fifteenth century B.C., or they may be very much older. If we assign to the *Rig-Veda* a position "probably midway between the earliest separation of mankind and the Christian era," as has been suggested by a recent writer (Cook, *Origins*, 19), we shall have a standpoint—not indeed of definite chronological worth, but one that will at least assist us in thinking out the various problems which present themselves in connection with prehistoric times.

What then do these songs—perhaps a thousand years older than Homer—tell us of the early religion of the Aryans? They show us indeed the cult of the powers of nature—the Sun, Dawn, Fire, &c.—which accompanied the Greek Aryans into Hellas; but they also give evidence of the worship of that Highest Power which Welcker takes to be the oldest "fact" in Greek history. "In the *Veda*," says Professor Max Müller (*op. cit.*, 528), "the idea of God, though never entirely lost, has been clouded over by errors. The names given to God have been changed to gods, and their real meaning has faded away from the memory of man. Even the earliest hymns of the *Veda* are not free from mythological phraseology."

"Nevertheless," says the same authority (*op. cit.*, 559), "there is a monotheism that precedes the polytheism of the *Veda*, and even in the invocations of their innumerable gods, the remembrance of a God, one and infinite, breaks through the midst of idolatrous phraseology like the blue sky that is hidden by passing clouds."

"They call Him" (so runs one of the Vedic hymns) "Indra, Mitra, Varuna, Agni—that which is One the sages call by many names" (*Rig-Veda*, i. 164, 46).

The question then naturally arises: Is it not possible to find out which of the many gods of the *Veda* was the original God of the whole Aryan race, of that great family of whom the Hindus form but a branch?<sup>1</sup>

The answer to this inquiry is much complicated by two difficulties: (1) that of fixing precisely the relative age of the Vedic hymns. The whole collection is pervaded by certain phrases—verses and half-verses—which probably belong to the oldest period, but are repeated as "reminiscences," or echoes throughout, giving an air of extreme antiquity to those hymns even whose claim to it, on other grounds, is doubtful.

(2) Then, if this mingling of earlier and later elements makes it puzzling from a literary standpoint to discern old from new, there is a fresh difficulty as soon as we come to look at the religious content of the hymns. The form of belief presented to us in the *Rig-Veda*—a form which (following the initiative of Professor Max Müller) is now called "Henotheism" or "Kathenotheism"—consists in this, that each god invoked is praised in his turn as the highest; that the attributes, and even the names, of the others are ascribed to him, and

<sup>1</sup> This question has recently been examined afresh by P. von Bradke, in his able *Dyaus, Asura, Ahura, Mazda, und die Asuras*, Halle, 1885. To this work we are largely indebted for the following sketch.



thus he towers for the time being over all the rest. The tendency to place the deity addressed at the moment at the head of the gods, so that mortals and immortals, earth and sky, bow before him, is probably due to the desire on the part of the worshipper to say what he imagines will be pleasing to the being whom he invokes. In the *Rig-Veda* this tendency is so pronounced as to need no demonstration; every page witnesses to it (von Bradke, *Dyaus*, 10 et seq.).

How then shall we find a way out of this confusion of ideas—a path through the apparently trackless forest, the Ur-wald of *Rig-Veda*? Simply by following that guide who has already disclosed to us so many secrets—Comparative Philology. The question: Who is the original god of the Aryan race? cannot be decided on the testimony of the Hindus alone; that of the sister-nations must be taken into account as well. Turning to the evidence of Language, we find that two only among all the divine beings of the *Veda* have any claim whatever to universal regard. The first of these, Varuna, the All-Embracer, undoubtedly occupies that place in the *Rig-Veda* which best coincides with our idea of what is implied in the word “God.” Varuna it is who not only upholds the world-order, guiding sun, moon, and stars in their course, but who also watches over the moral world, punishing sin indeed, but pardoning the penitent and protecting the righteous. The hymns to Varuna are among the most pathetic, as they are the most beautiful, in the *Veda*. Instinctively we say: Varuna is, must be, the Aryan Jehovah; and Language gives some support to the belief, for it seems to prove that Varuna was known as a divine being before the separation. The equation:—

Skt. Varuna; Gk. Ouranos,

however, even if phonetically correct,<sup>1</sup> limits the knowledge of Varuna to two peoples. More is required to establish the supremacy of a universal God.

We turn then to the second name, Dyâus (God of Light), and find for it the following equation:—

Skt. Dyâus.  
Gk. Zeus (gen. Dios).  
Lat. \*Iovis (Ju-piter).  
Teut. Tiu, zio.

The correspondence of Dyâus-Zeus-Iovis-Tiu is accepted by every philologist; these names all proceed from one and the same source, viz., the old Indo-European word for God, \*Dyêus. On the strength of the evidence of language then, Dyâus and not Varuna is the original god of the Aryan family, worshipped when as yet there were neither Hindus nor Teutons, Greeks nor Latins, but all were simply brethren in the Old Home. That the four branches who carried away the name represent both the Asiatic and European Aryans, is significant, and hardly less so is the fact that in two at least of the European nations (the Greek and the Roman), representing again the most highly gifted members of the Aryan family, Dyâus = Zeus = Jupiter was regarded in historic times as the Supreme Being. We turn then with longing to the old Indian Song of Knowledge, and ask what it has to tell us of the Being whom our forefathers worshipped thousands of years ago.

Concerning Dyaus, however, the *Veda* has but little to say, and that little indirectly; there are no hymns dedicated to Dyaus alone. In the centuries

<sup>1</sup> The exact phonetic equivalent of the Greek “Ouranos” would be “Varana,” not “Varuna.” Hence the equation given above is considered doubtful by Ludwig (*Der Rig-Veda, übersetzt mit Commentar u. Einleitung*, iii. 312). However, it is accepted by Professor Max Müller (*Biography of Words*, 146), and Hillebrandt and James Darmesteter both infer an Aryan “Varana” from the existence of the Zend “Varena” (A. Hillebrandt, *Varuna u. Mitra*, p. 13; J. Darmesteter, *Ormuzd et Ahriman*, p. 69).

which have elapsed since the separation, Dyaus has become but a shadow—a process which goes on, for his place is taken first by Varuna, then by Indra, and finally he is eclipsed altogether.

The word “Dyaus” is derived from the root *div*, “to shine,” and means not only “God of Light,” of the bright heaven, but “heaven” itself. In later ages it changed its gender, became a feminine, and was used to denote merely “the sky.” This extraordinary transition we shall explain presently. Meanwhile, let us note that the fact of Dyaus signifying both “heaven” and “heaven’s Lord,” has been brought forward by O. Gruppe in the work to which we have already referred (p. 212), as a proof that in the primeval period there was no god, and consequently no religion whatsoever (*op. cit.*, § 8). In this he is opposed by the most eminent philologists, and Gruppe himself is obliged to admit the significance of that other fact, that, on their first entrance into history, we find Dyaus worshipped as a divine being by four branches of the Aryan family, who know nothing of him merely as “the sky.” Moreover, in the Introduction to his version of *Rig-Veda* (published after the translation was completed), A. Ludwig (*op. cit.*, iii. 312), one of the most eminent commentators on the *Veda*, expresses his conviction that the significance of Dyaus has been “hitherto strangely undervalued” (*arg unterschätzt*), and acknowledges that in several places where he himself had used the “more colourless” expression “heaven,” the word “Dyaus” (that is, as the name of “God in heaven”) would have been more in place.

Now, it is a very curious thing that, as Professor Roth long ago pointed out (*Die höchsten Götter der arischen Völker in Zeitschrift der deutsch-morgenländ. Gesells.*, vi. 68), the Indian Aryans did not understand by “heaven” the visible sky. “The Indian conception of Nature in the oldest period,” he says, “has this peculiarity, that it distinguishes sharply between air-space (*Luftraum*) and heaven (*Himmel*). This distinction is extremely ancient (*uralt*), as the whole mythology of the *Veda* shows, and at the root of it lies the separation of air and light. The light has its home, not in the air-space, but beyond that in the infinite realm of heaven; it is not bound to the bright sun-orb, but is independent of that, an eternal power. Between the world of light and the earth lies the kingdom of air, in which gods bear rule, in order to keep free the path of the light to the earth, and thus ensure the entrance of its quickening might, and at the same time provide a way for the heavenly waters, which also have their home in the world of light. . . . On this conception rests the separation of the whole world into three divisions—heaven, air, earth—in the highest of which dwells the highest god.”

This conception is, as Roth points out, *uralt*, “of extreme antiquity,” and it occurs also among the Greek Aryans. The idea of a fifth element was familiar to them, and the association of the “æther and the splendour of Zeus” is met with in Homer (*Iliad*, xiii. 837; *cf.* Welcker, i. 299). We might therefore, perhaps, be warranted in transferring the idea of a realm of light, as the abode of the god of light, and distinct from the material sky, to the primeval period.

It is better, however, not to avail ourselves of the coincidence. Such an idea seems to belong rather to the secondary than to the primary stage of religious thought. If it existed in the earliest ages it would give us a very high idea of our forefathers’ power of thought. It is, however, the visible sky from which we prefer to start as associated with their earliest ideas of the divine.

How then came our forefathers, the united Aryans, to associate the idea of God with the sky?



The answer would seem to be : (1) by reason of its stability. Sun and Moon are great powers, but they disappear, they come and go ; whereas the heavens exist in permanence—night and day they are before the eye. (2) Again, Sun and Moon are great powers, but even their might is eclipsed by that of the Sky-god, who can shroud himself and them in the darkness of the tempest, and in whose hands are the thunderbolt and the lightning. Thunder is thus the personification of irresistible Might. (3) Yet again, although the sun must early have become an object of veneration as the source of light and heat, yet the sun is by no means an unmixed blessing—with his fiery beams he can produce both drought and pestilence. On the other hand, in the blue depths of heaven, embracing the earth on every side, and covering it as with a shield, primitive man could see naught but friendliness and goodwill. (4) On the bosom of the heaven, moreover, float the precious rain-bearers, whose treasures bring food to sustain the life of man.

Gathering up these thoughts, we find that the heavens alone offered to primitive man that combination of ideas which met his needs. The heavens endure for ever ; they give the rain ; they drop down fatness ; they shield the earth ; the Being who inhabits them wields the thunderbolt—he is mightiest as well as kindest of all. He is God and Lord of all.

Nor did the heavens fail man in that secondary stage when advancing thought reached beyond the material. They become the instruments through which the Being who inhabits them controls the moral world and works out his judgments. The heavens surround man on all sides, in no way can he escape from them ; the sun is the Eye of Varuna as of Zeus ; the stars are his spies, keeping watch during the night, disappearing during the day—who knows whither ?—to report to Varuna all that they have seen of the doings of men.

Finally, if in a still later stage of development man began to meditate on the nature of this Divine Being, could he (as Roth has beautifully said) find a better, a higher, finer, stronger comparison for the Unknown God than the Light ?

That the primitive Aryans had anything but a faint glimmering of all this cannot be maintained, as will be evident whenever we begin to trace the progress of the Greek branch. Nevertheless it is well at the outset to endeavour to realise to ourselves how the idea of God as the World-ruler could be developed—we do not say originated—by the processes of Natural Religion. Given the “one point of light,” the idea of God, of a Being within the heavens, all the rest follows naturally. Nay, we may go further. Even if we imagine that, as a result of the wanderings from the primal home of mankind to that second home where the Aryan family developed, the very idea of “God” had to be re-won, as it were, *de novo* from the divine prompting within ; the deep blue heavens in their purity and beauty are calculated, beyond any other work of nature, to awaken in man the slumbering perception of the divine.

“The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead.”

There only remains for us now to prove from the Veda that our forefathers had this one point of light : Did they worship merely the “wide vault of heaven,” as Gruppe and his school maintain, or did they worship a Being within that vault ? This is the vital question, and it can only be settled by an examination of the manner in which Dyaus is spoken of in the *Vedas*. As we have seen, he is there reduced to a mere shadow, and it is only from the

"reminiscences" of him which the Hindus have carried away with them from the Old Home that any conclusion can be arrived at. These "reminiscences" are contained in the epithets applied to Dyaus. They have recently been made the subject of a very thorough investigation by von Bradke (see p. 216, footnote), whose conclusions we shall now briefly lay before the reader.

In the *Vedas*, Dyaus is called Pita = Father, Janita = progenitor or creator, and Asura = the Living or Self-Existent One.

I. Of these the name "Father" is his peculiarly. It belongs to Dyaus by right, as Rajan = king, does to Varuna, or Virrahan = serpent-slayer, to Indra, and evidently dates from a time when kings were not. Dyaus-pita, Dyaus the Father, is an echo of the old patriarchal days when the authority of the House Father or the Clan-Father was supreme. It is as the Great Father that our fathers bore him in their thoughts to their historic homes:—

Skt. *Dyaus-pita*; Gk. *Zeus pater*; Lat. *Jupiter*, and to the extreme significance of the expression we shall return presently. Meanwhile, let us note that closely connected with Dyaus are the Devas or Bright Ones of the sky.

Skt. *dēva* (from *div* = to shine, as much as *Dyaus*); Lat. *deus*; Lith. *diēvas*; O.I. *dia*; O.N. *tívar*, god.

"The word *dēva*," says von Bradke, "although usually translated by God, is but imperfectly so rendered; *dēva* approaches most closely to the idea which we unite with the word 'holy one' or 'angel.'" From the etymology of the word, the devas appear to have been connected with, or dependent on Dyaus, and were probably thought of as his sons or his bodyguard. Dyaus, as Ludwig has pointed out (*op. cit.* 312 *et seq.*), is also expressly said to be the father of the deities Agni, Parjanya, Indra, Surya, and Ushas—father, that is, in the sense that from him they derive their power. He also stands above Mitra and Varuna, for it is he who has brought their rule into being.

It is essential to note that, in the older Vedic hymns, the name Dyaus-pita stands alone. The mythological union of Father Sky and Earth-mother under the joint name of Dyavaprithivi is of later date. Goddesses, be it observed, are not numerous in the *Veda*. The great power Aditi, the Infinite, appears to have been an afterthought, called into life in later days to account for the existence of the Seven Adityas, the Eternal, Immortal beings who dwell in the world of light. The mother, therefore, was born after her sons. The addition of Mother Earth as the complement of Father Sky is a touch of the same character.

(2) The epithet "Asura," however, is quite as significant as that of Pita. It is derived from *asw* (*as*) = life, in all its fullness, vigour, and freshness, especially the life of the soul. "The term Asura," says Grassmann (*Wörterbuch zum Rig-Veda* sub "*Asura*") "is only used of *incorporeal, spiritual* life, generally associated with the idea of wisdom, and denotes God, and especially a highest God." *Aswa*, therefore, may be rendered "the Highest Being, He who has life in Himself." It is a grand word, and its full significance in the mind of the old hymn-makers is best seen in the word *asuryam*, a neuter substantive denoting the position or qualities of the Asura. Among many other passages von Bradke gives the following. In a hymn to Indra, it is said:—

"Thou becamest the Distributor of all blessings, when thou didst take the place of the Asura" (*asuryam*, vi. 36, 1).

Again, "To thee, O Indra, was fully accorded by all the gods the same Asura-power as that of Dyaus, when thou, in union with Vishnu, didst stay Vritra, the serpent, who had imprisoned the waters" (of the sky, vi. 20, 2).



Grassmann renders the words "Asura-power" as "the whole fulness of God," and this it is which the old poet imagines to have been given by consent of all the gods to Indra as a reward for his valour in slaying the dragon of Drought. He can conceive of no higher honour to be bestowed upon the usurper, Indra, than that he should be raised to the sovereignty of Dyaus.

We get then for Asura the significance of "highest divine ruler." But here the "henotheistic" difficulty to which we have already referred (p. 216), comes in. Several gods—Varuna, Indra, Agni, Soma, &c.—are addressed as "Asura." How then can we determine who was the first, the original Asura? Is it possible to bring any clearness into the haziness of the Veda? Von Bradke thinks it is. In the old *padas* or refrains, the "reminiscences" which constantly recur with but slight variation throughout the Vedic hymns, he sees a way out of the difficulty. "If," he says, "we find a refrain constantly recurring in which 'Asura' is applied to a particular god, we may conclude that in this a relic of an older period of Indian literature is contained." And from the careful comparison of these refrains, he has come to the conclusion that Dyaus was the first Asura, the Asura, the Living, Self-Existent One.

How far these expressions—the Father, the Living One, the Ruler, which travelled down with the Indian Aryans from remote antiquity—are compatible with the notion that our forefathers worshipped the "vault of heaven," we must leave to the judgment of the reader. It is, to our thinking, a fact of extreme significance that in the hymns addressed to the later dual deity, Dyavaprithivi = Father Sky and Mother Earth, the word *asura* is never used, fond of it as the Vedic poets are in general. It seems as though the poet were aware of a terrible declension, and could not bring himself to give to the visible sky the epithet which had belonged to the "incorporeal" God of the heavens.

Finally, in consequence (so von Bradke supposes) of the current use of Dyavaprithivi with its pronounced feminine ending, the word *dyaus* itself became feminine, and sank to mean "the sky." The place of Dyaus, the old heaven-god, of Varuna, his delegate, was fully taken by Indra, the personification of material good, himself destined to be superseded by the deities who still rule the Indian pantheon.

For the further history of the words "deva" and "asura," which is exceedingly interesting, we refer the reader to von Bradke's work. Here we would only remark that the Ahura Mazda, Lord of Knowledge, the Omniscient, the Highest God of the Persians, is held to be one and the same in all essential characteristics with the Asura Varuna. Asura = Ahura. If this be so, then the conclusion is forced upon us that the Indo-European Dyaus, the Father, is the primary, the initial point of light, whence proceeded the four secondary developments of the idea of God—the Hindu Varuna, the Persian Ahura Mazda, the Greek Zeus, the Roman Jupiter.

In addition to the worship of Father Zeus, however, we must assume, on the evidence of language, that there passed into Greece with the Aryans the cults of nature-powers, worshipped purely as such—sun, moon, dawn, and fire. Not, however, in the fully developed forms which we meet with in Homer (Max Müller, *Introd. to the Science of Religion*). Even in the *Veda*, in hymns composed after the journeying of the Hindu Aryans from the Old Home, and the settlement in the New, personification is by no means complete. "In the *Veda*," says Professor Max Müller (*Chips*, ii. 75), "the whole nature of these so-called gods is still transparent, their first conception in many cases clearly perceptible. There are as yet no genealogies, no settled marriages between gods and goddesses. The father is sometimes the son, the brother is the

husband, and she who in one hymn is the mother is in another the wife. As the conceptions of the poets vary, so varies the nature of these gods."

*Religious and Moral Ideas.*—Passing now to the examination of the other ideas, moral and religious, which the Aryans may have taken with them to their historic homes, we are obliged again to have recourse to the evidence of Comparative Philology. The state of society pictured in the *Vedas* represents a secondary period, an advance of some centuries on the primitive notions that existed in the Old Home. The *Vedas* alone, therefore, will not suffice. As in the case of Dyaus-Zeus, the sister languages must be called in to bear witness to what the united Aryans thought and believed. As to the number of witnesses necessary, we agree with Professor Max Müller that the testimony of one member of the Asiatic and one of the European group of languages suffices to establish a conception as belonging to the primal period.

Following this rule, then, we find that the first fathers of our race were familiar, before the separation, with the conceptions of sin, punishment, sacrifice, holy (dedicated) things and faith (Max Müller, *Biog. of Words*). In what sense precisely these words are to be understood of the primitive period is a point in which great caution is necessary—it is so easy to read modern ideas into any old conception. We may be content with knowing that one and all point to that sense of the existence of a Great Father, Ruler of the world (of the Microcosmos of each individual soul), which we are justified in taking as our starting-point. From the very beginning, as far back as we can trace him, man is found with a knowledge of the difference between right and wrong. Man, "the two-footed animal," certainly meets us in the *Vedas*, but so, thank God! does Man "the Thinker."

Of the way in which sin was regarded in the early period, we can form some idea, at least, from the *Veda*. Granted that all moral convictions must have strengthened and developed during the interval that had elapsed between the separation and the composition of the Vedic hymns, the germs of the Vedic ideas certainly existed previously. In the *Veda*, then, Varuna (the delegate, as Ludwig calls him, of the original Heaven-father Dyaus) is constantly depicted as resolutely opposed to *āgas*, "sin": "The way in which this energy of Varuna in the moral world is represented," says Professor Roth (*op. cit.*, p. 72), "and the humble acknowledgments of sinfulness and penitence which the old poets make before him, must be insisted upon with so much the more emphasis, because, as a rule, we are inclined to regard the religious life of a people as merged in its myths and cult-ceremonies, and to measure it by the latter." The fact is, Roth adds, that, as the hymns show, it was a great sorrow to these old Aryans to find themselves sinful, and to know that man was daily trespassing against Varuna's commands. There is no hymn to Varuna in which supplications are not addressed to him for pardon of sin,<sup>1</sup> as they are addressed to the other gods for wealth and fame.

The extent to which the idea of sacrifice, again, was developed among the Indian Aryans, must be studied in a work like Ludwig's Commentary before it can be duly estimated. The sacrifice became the centre of Indian life, the pivot round which all things sacred and mundane revolved. The contrast,

<sup>1</sup> "O Varuna," so runs one of these old prayers, "we turn aside thy wrath by Sacrifice, by Prayer, by Drink-offerings. Thou who hast the power, wise, ever-living King (Asura), forgive us the sins which we have committed. O Varuna, loose us from our bonds—the lowest, the middle, the highest—then shall we in thy service, Aditya, freed from sin, to Aditi (the Infinite) belong" (*Rig-Veda*; Grassmann's translation, i. 24, 14, 15).

The bonds or ropes by which sin is often represented in the *Veda*, remind us of another Indian name for moral evil—"amhas," the throttler, related to "ahi" = the serpent = choker, throttler (Max Müller, *Science of Language*, i. 435).



sharp and striking, between the Greek and the Indian national character, however, forbids our attempting to infer too much from the Indian religious development. All we deduce from it is that ideas, the same in kind, if not in degree, must have existed among the primitive Aryans. Let us recollect that by the term "primitive Aryans" we designate a people who, from the evidence of the language which they built up, must have dwelt together, on the very lowest estimate, for a thousand years. Let us recollect, moreover, that an authority like Whitney scouts the notion of such a period as a thousand years being sufficient for the growth of the old mother-tongue. He regards six thousand years as perhaps too short a time, and adds that even to hazard a conjecture on the subject is "foolish" (*Life and Growth of Language*, p. 192).

What ideas can not have been developed in the course of one of several—thousand years? Do not let us place on too low a level the stage arrived at by Man the Thinker, when he marched out of the Old Home with his four-footed comrades.

Ludwig tells us that he finds in *Rig-Veda*, the Song of Knowledge, underlying all later ideas, three conceptions of great value and worth. These are—Rita, the World-order, Satyam = Truth, and Brahma = Prayer. On this simple and beautiful foundation was reared the fabric of the Brahmanic religious system, a system so exacting in its complexity that human nature finally revolted from it, and sought relief in the purer, gentler doctrines of the Buddha.

Is there anything underlying the oldest Greek thought known to us at all analogous to Rita-Satyam-Brahma—World-Order, Truth, Prayer—the three-fold basis of the *Veda*?

Yes; we think there is. Our Græco-Aryans also brought with them into their New Home a triad of equally noble and helpful ideas: *Themis* = Settled Law, *Dike* = Justice, and *Eteon* = that which is (in contradistinction to that which is not), Truth.

These words developed on Greek soil, but they belong in their essence to the old Aryan stock; therefore we cannot do better than examine them here.

(1) *Eteon* is derived from the old verb *es* = to be, and corresponds to the Indian Satyam, and our own "sooth."<sup>1</sup> *Eteon* is used by Homer in a significant way. For instance, Odysseus, when the Achæans are anxious to abandon the war and return home, stands up in the Assembly and advises them to wait and see whether Calchas the Seer, who had predicted that the city should be taken in the tenth year, had spoken truth (*eteon*) (*Iliad*, ii. 300) or not. Again, when Odysseus is landed on his longed-for native isle, he looks about him in bewilderment, and says: "Tell me whether I am in very truth (*eteon*) come to mine own dear fatherland" (*Od.*, 13, 328).

(2) *Themis*, and (3) *Dike*, Law and Justice, are a well-nigh inseparable pair. The best definition of both is that given by H. Schmidt (*Synonymik*, i. § 18; cf. also Lehrs, *Pop. Aufsätze*, pp. 95, 105). *Themis*, he says, is the Eternal Divine Law, unwritten, existing from the beginning; it dwells in the consciousness of man, and in the order of the Universe, moral and physical, inseparable from both. Over this eternal, sacred natural law, Zeus (in Aryan days Dyaus, the Heaven-father) watches; kings are but his deputies to guard the *themistes* for him.

The world-order represented by *Themis*, however, is apt to be broken through by man with his free-will, and therefore to every rank and every age is shown what is due according to this order = a definite circle of rights and

<sup>1</sup> Gk. *Eteos*, "true"; Skt. *satyas*, "true," *satyam*, "truth"; O. Norse *sannr*, "true"; A. Sax. *soth*, "sooth" (G. Curtius, Pott, &c., &c.).

corresponding duties. This showing is Dike = Justice — literally, the Way pointed out.

Dike and Themis both proceed from the Highest Orderer of things; Themis sometimes means to rule with royal power (*themisteuein*)—Dike, never; even in the earliest days she stands contrasted with force.

Such was the significance which these ideas attained to in Greece. As stated, we mention them here in advance, because they are in their essence Aryan ideas. The Greek Themis corresponds to the Indian *dharma*, and the Roman *fas*, all meaning "law," settled and established. Into the far-reaching theories built by Leist and others on the primitive conception of *dharma-themis-fas* = divine law, as constituting the earliest strata of the common law of the Aryan peoples, we need not enter here. What we have to note is simply that the Greek Aryans, like their Indian brethren, carried away from the Old Home certain germinal ideas which became wondrously fruitful. Each people kept in mind and developed out of the common stock such ideas as suited best the national character. Among the Indians these germinal ideas developed into a belief in Truth, in the World-order, in the power of Prayer; among the Greeks they likewise brought forth Truth, together with a supreme regard for Law and the Way pointed out—Justice. Let us note as illustrating further the character of the two peoples, that whilst the Indians later deified Faith = *Śraddha*, the Greeks regarded both Law and Justice, Themis and Dike, as divine.

One more thought and we have done. The word *hieros*, "sacred," originally signified "strong," "fresh," "vigorous"—a meaning which it still occasionally holds in Homer (*Iliad*, i. 238). That it was eventually restricted to religion arose, doubtless, as Dr. Schrader points out, from the "uplifted feeling" of the worshipper—the sense of strength which his religion brought him.

How then shall we picture to ourselves our primitive Aryans setting out from the Old Home? Wandering over the face of the earth, dull and indifferent, obeying appetite alone, *proni ac ventri obœdientes*, burdened with the fear of phantoms, magic, and superstition in its thousand forms? Plenty of phantoms, and a goodly load of superstitions the "two-footed animals" undoubtedly bore along with them; but beside the two-footed animals marched the THINKERS, bearing a nobler burden—already loyal to Law, following the "Way pointed out," looking up to the blue depths wherein dwells the Heaven-father by day, guiding their course under his eye by the stars, "the light-strewers," by night.

## THE PREHISTORIC PERIOD

Arrived in the broad plains of Thessaly (p. 123), or, if you prefer it, in the narrow valleys of Epeirus (p. 123), the first care of the Græco-Aryans is, in either case, to establish the worship of the Heaven-father, *Dyaus*, whom we are now to know as *Zeus* at *Dōdōna*. Whether this original *Dōdōna* is to be sought for in Thessaly or in Thesprotia really matters not.

And not only the first-comers into Greece, but offshoots sent out as colonies from the parent stem, and the fresh Aryan clans pouring into Hellas, seem to have had the same care for the worship of *Zeus*. In historic times it is found in every part of Hellas—not alone, for it is associated, as we know, with the nature-cults—but as something distinctly apart from and higher than these. This we shall prove shortly.

The beginnings of Greek religious history are very dark. The oldest



"monuments" can give us some help, but Homer little or none. Ages elapsed before that great genius to whom we give the name of "Homer" appeared and crystallised into clear and definite forms the religious ideas of his time. Yet these ideas had a real existence in Greek thought from the very first, and they expressed themselves in two ways: in the great unwritten literature of names, and in the localisation of certain cults in certain places.

**a. Witness of Names.**—Turning to Welcker who, more than any other writer, has entered into sympathy with these old "seekers after God," we ask: "What then are the very oldest names connected with the Greek religion?" (Welcker, i. p. 129).

He has his answer ready: "At the remotest limit of Greek antiquity," he says, "we are met by the words *theos* and *dæmon*, both denoting God, and the names of Zeus and Kronion. There is nothing older for us in the Greek religion." Let us see what these mean.

1. The word *Theos* was formerly associated with the series *deva*, &c. (p. 220), derived from *div*, "bright." But on linguistic grounds this etymology is doubtful. Brugmann has lately endeavoured to connect the word with Sans. *ghô-rá-s*, "commanding reverence" (*Ber. d. kgl. Sachs. Ges. d. Wissenschaft*, p. 41, 1889; quoted by Schrader, *op. cit.* p. 415, note).

2. *Daimon*.—The other expression for God used by Homer and Hesiod, and also by Æschylus, is *daimōn*, "spirit," a word of great significance. It springs from the root of *daio*, "to divide"; and hence is thought by many to denote God as the Allotter, the Distributor, He who apportions to man his lot on earth. Welcker, however, reminds us that to divide is also to order and to know: "We know only what we have divided and analysed" (Schiller to Goethe) (i. p. 139). Hence the word may also mean "He who knows"—a signification which seems to us peculiarly appropriate to a people like the Greeks.

Later, *daimōn*, *daimones* was used to designate subordinate deities; the term is also applied by Hesiod to the spirits of the men of the Silver and Golden Ages, and in this sense these dæmons are to be carefully distinguished from the gods. Finally, it is employed to denote the Manes, shades of the departed.

Nevertheless, in each and all of these significations, the word always bore with it the idea of mind, as opposed to matter—the spiritual in contradistinction to the material.

3. Zeus, as we know, is Dyaus, the God of Light of the bright heavens.

4. Kronion is considered to mean the Ripener, the Completer (Preller, *Gr. Myth.*, p. 51).

Thus, at the very outset we meet with four words exhibiting a spiritual conception of the highest being.

1. He is *theos*, he who "commands reverence," and (2) the *dæmon*, he who "knows" all things, or (if we prefer the other rendering) who "apportions" all things. (3) He is Zeus, god of Light; and (4) Kronion, the Completer. And to this conception of Zeus, as the Highest Being, the Greeks always remained faithful. "To every Greek of deep feeling, "from the earliest period onward," says K. O. Müller (*Eum.* 189), "Zeus alone is properly God in the highest sense of the word."

It is, however, quite evident that in dealing with the beginnings of things we are apt to read our own ideas into these beginnings. Words often say a great deal more to us than they did to the men who coined them, and no words require more careful handling than those which describe the Unseen. When, for instance, we find the early Aryans and the early Greeks calling their

highest god Dyaus-pita = Zeus-pater, Light-father, we, on whom the ends of the world have come, can hardly avoid transferring to the name our thoughts about the "FATHER of Lights, in whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning," and we proceed to attribute to these early Aryan and Greek upward-lookers ideas which the greatest human thinkers never thought out for themselves, "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all," says St. John (i. 1, 5). "We ought not to deceive ourselves," comments Professor Max Müller, "and try to find in the primitive vocabulary of the Aryans those sublime meanings which, after thousands of years, those words have assumed in our language" (ii. 492).

Let us be thankful for our one starting-point, our one ray of light.

What we may safely read out of these names—not into them—is that the primitive religion "was as far removed from coarse fetichism as from abstract idealism" (M. Müller, *Chips*, iv. 233).

(b) **Localisation of Cults.**—So much for the testimony of names. Now, if we turn to the other witness for ancient times, the localisation of certain cults in certain districts, we shall find a very significant protest against any rash idealism. This will become clear if we pause to consider for a moment which of the five great ideas that thinkers tell us were so potent in developing the conception of the Divine (p. 214), was most potent at this early stage. Was it the overwhelming sense of the Infinite? or the attractive power of Beauty? or the keen desire to Know? or the striving after Perfection? or the Moral Imperative within?

Facts say: Not one of the five. These motive-powers undoubtedly are already in existence, dimly struggling here and there for utterance in some noble nature; but they are not yet dominant, their time is not yet come, they will burst into activity at a later stage. "That was not first which is spiritual," says our witness, "but that which is natural, and afterward that which is spiritual."<sup>1</sup> This is the Law of Development, and the Hellenes, with all their genius, were no exception to the Law.

The great motive-power of these earliest seekers after God must undoubtedly have been—the sense of dependence. Let us picture to ourselves these early Greek Aryans in their struggle with Nature in a country such as we have found Greece to be. Think of the periodical drought—think of these primitive settlers, who have not yet learned how to make a *pontos*, a pathway across the "broad back of the sea"—think of them shut up within their huts and exposed to all the horrors of famine. In what possible way can we conceive of them approaching their God except as the Food-giver, the Rain-giver, the Father in the bright sky?

Do you say that this is a very "materialistic," a very "earthly" view to take—very "degrading" to the Hellenes?

Nay; do not let us be wiser than Wisdom. Our witness tells us again that this very thing is the great Father's express testimony to Himself. "He left not Himself without witness, in that He did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."<sup>2</sup>

How shall we, who pray "Give us this day our daily bread," call the same prayer "materialistic" in the mouths of those poor children of Nature, on whom the yoke of Nature pressed with a force which we, in our luxury, can barely realise? Since the Advent of Him who has given us an understanding, we pray first "Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done"; but in the beginning of necessity it could not be so. The old prayer which has come down to us,

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 46.

<sup>2</sup> Acts xiv. 17.



"Rain, rain, dear Zeus, on the fields of the Athenians," is but the pre-Christian prayer for daily bread.

It will not surprise us, therefore, to find that Zeus, as the Rain-giver, was worshipped on the summits of lofty mountains around whose peaks the precious rain-clouds gather. Well-nigh every mountain in Greece and the islands was sacred to Zeus—Olympus and Pelion in Thessaly; Oeta in Trachis; Helicon, Cithæron, and Laphystium in Bœotia; Parnes and Hymettus in Attica; Lycæus, Ithome, Arachnæum, and Apesas in Peloponnesus; Ocha in Eubœa; Panhellenium in Ægina; Ætna in Sicily; Ida in Crete, and so on. So universal was the custom, that an old writer, Melanthes, could say in a treatise on the Sacrifices, that every mountain was the Mount of Zeus, since it had been the custom of the ancients to sacrifice to him as the Highest (*Hypatos*) on the heights (*cf.* Welcker, i. 170).

"As the Highest?" says the reader. "Surely we have here a motive very different from 'as the Rain-giver'?" True; the only question is, how far we are warranted in placing this motive as a power and a force in the earliest times. We may see, with the venerable Welcker (§ 32), that the custom of worshipping the "Highest on the heights" has its roots also in other and far nobler feelings than the sense of dependence. Where, indeed, may God be sought better than on those lofty peaks which, seen from below, appear to lose themselves in the invisible?

Leaving behind turmoil and misery, earth and its cares lessening in the distance, the worshipper, as he climbs the steep ascent of some mountain-side, sees in the laborious path before him the very emblem of the heavenward road, and in the solitudes above, overarched by the blue sky alone, the fitting shrine of the Infinite. God is nearer to man on the mountain-top than in the valley. Mountain worship is consecrated to us by the most sacred associations (St. Mark vi. 46, ix. 2); it was from a mountain that, amid thunderings and lightnings, the Law was given to the Chosen People; it was on a mountain that were first uttered the wisest and sweetest words that ever fell upon the ears of man, the Great Sermon, the prayer of prayers, unveiling the Father Himself.

"How then," says an indignant reader, "can you degrade the early worship of the Hellenes—the seeking for God—into a mere seeking for the bread that perisheth?"

Dear reader, "*first* the Natural, afterward that which is Spiritual." We willingly admit—nay, we should be guilty of gross injustice to a people like the Hellenes if we did not admit—that here and there was to be found among them, even in the earliest days, an Abraham climbing the mount of Sacrifice with the one aim, the simple desire to do the Will of God in so far as that Will was known to him. Such pure and noble souls have existed in all ages. Woe to the race of man, had this not been so. But what warrant have we for supposing that Abrahams abounded? Was this the case even among the Chosen People? Turn to their record and see for yourself. The souls which seek for communion with God are those which gradually leaven the mass, not the mass itself.

Do not, however, let us exchange sentiment for sentimentality. What is there degrading in the prayer for rain? Look at one of the most beautiful and one of the most ancient pictures of ancient Greece that have come down to us: Ambassadors are sent out by all the tribes of Greece—from East and West they come; and crossing the sea in their little skiffs, direct their course to the island of Ægina. Why? Because there dwells Æacus the Just, a man renowned throughout all Hellas for his piety—a man who is not only

beloved by Zeus Hellanios but is his son, so the legend runs. A sore drought afflicts the land, and Æacus is asked to intercede with Zeus Hellanios, the god of the island, for all the tribes of Hellas. He climbs the summit of the loftiest mountain on the island, and there, doubtless surrounded by the representatives of all the peoples, and after sacrifice and purification, he lifts his hands and prays for rain. His prayer is heard, the rain descends in showers upon the thirsty land, and the mountain is thenceforward known as "Panhellenium," the mountain of all the Hellenes.<sup>1</sup>

Call the story a myth and a legend if you will. We are not concerned to defend its every feature. What we are concerned about is its kernel, and that is the spirit in which the old Hellenes pursued their worship of the "Highest on the heights." Is there anything "degrading" in this picture of the old patriarch interceding 'as priest and king, not only for his own people, but embracing in his sympathy all who, later, were called Hellenes? We think not. Man must live, and could he, in those early days, by his own efforts? Can we of the present day, with all the resources of science, bring down a single shower of rain or a blink of sunshine? There's the rub.

The sense of dependence then must be recognised as constituting in early days the great motive-power in the seeking after God, and it shows itself in various ways.

Thus, Dicæarchus (*Descr. Gr.*, ii. 8; Bursian, i. 97; Mezières, pp. 35, 40, 117) tells us concerning Pelion, in historic times, that on its highest summit stood a temple of Zeus Acræos, to which every year, at the rising of Sirius, there went, led by the priest, a procession of the chief men of the district, clad in the skins of newly-slaughtered sheep. This custom is one of those which may safely be traced back to times when as yet there were no temples, simply an altar of Zeus on the heights. Why did the procession take place at the rising of Sirius? Because the rise of the Dog-star announces the approach of the fifty dog-days, the hottest time of the year. Why were the worshippers clad in sheep-skins? Because the fleece is the emblem of the rain-cloud. Why the skins of newly-slaughtered sheep? Because the "slaughtering" probably took place in sacrificial rites which preceded the ascent. The whole ceremony is evidently a rite of intercession for rain.<sup>2</sup>

Then, turning to those other cults which accompanied the Aryans into Greece, we find the same lesson. Take the little district of Attica: on its eastern side—which, as we know, is covered by a thin scanty soil and exposed to a four-months' yearly drought (p. 152)—the patrons of the land are the bright powers of heaven, Zeus the Rain-giver, Athena the Dew-giver.<sup>3</sup> On its western side the plain of Eleusis—the only fertile part of Attica, whose deep clay soil can hold and retain moisture enough for the nourishment of the precious seed-corn—we find the worship of the Chthonian deities, the deities, that is, of earth—Demeter, Mother Earth herself, and Persephone, the plant-world, offspring of Mother Earth.

Another district, even smaller, shows an equally striking contrast. In the little coast-strip of Achaia, in the territory once appertaining to Ægeium, there lies on the west a fertile corn-land. Here prevailed the cult of broad-bosomed Gæa, Mother Earth under another name. On the east rise the mountains,

<sup>1</sup> Now known as to *oros*=the Mountain simply, or as the Mount Elias.

<sup>2</sup> For the ceremony used on Mount Lycæus in times of drought, see Paus. viii. 38, 3.

<sup>3</sup> This whole subject and the connection of Athena with the three Dew-sisters, Aglaurus, Pandrosus, and Herse, and the mysterious Errephoroi, the child-priestesses of the goddess, is admirably treated in the *Physikalische Geographie von Griechenland*, of Neumann and Partsch, p. 25 *et seq.*, to which we refer the reader. See also *Hellas*, pp. 122 and 266.



unsuited to agricultural pursuits, and here the patron deity was Artemis Agrotera, goddess of the chase (E. Curtius, *Pel.*, i. 477). Can anything be more instructive as to the great motive-power in early times? Again, as illustrative of the close connection between the land and the nature-religion which arises in it, we may note that Demeter, Earth-mother, bore at Thelpusa in Arcadia the name of Erinyes, Fury (Paus. viii. 42; cf. Welcker, 2, 492), an epithet which indeed the local legend explained in its own way, but which is only deciphered by the storms and floods of an Arcadian winter. At Phigalia, in the same country, she was known as Melaina, the Black Demeter. Here she is said to have retired into a cave, mourning the daughter of whom she had been robbed—Kora-Persephone, the lost vegetation of summer. If we would know why Mother Earth put on her black robe at Phigalia specially, the reason is not far to seek, for Phigalia is a wild and lonely spot, lying among the hills, and possessed of no fruitful plain such as the other Greek cities could boast of. Here Mother Earth might well lament for her lost offspring. In historic times, the barrenness of the spot and the frequent famines resulting therefrom combined to send forth more Phigalians to foreign service than came from any other canton of Arcadia (Paus. viii. 42; Curtius, *Pel.*, i. 318 *et seq.*).

Closely connected with the sense of dependence is the instinct of self-preservation, the feeling of the need of protection. This too, as we might suppose, finds expression in the religion of early times, especially in the worship of Poseidon. The cult of this deity, as god of fresh water,<sup>1</sup> may or may not have accompanied the Aryans into Greece. In either case, it received its chief impetus when the Greeks came face to face with the dangers of the sea, the flood, and the earthquake. Everywhere (as we have already seen, p. 149) along the sea-coast, and in districts exposed to earthquake-shocks, such as Achaia, and to floods, as Bœotia and Arcadia, Poseidon was worshipped—simply as an outcome of the instinct of self-preservation—a fact which puts to flight two ingenious theories about the “origin” of religion. There have not been wanting those who maintain that “religion” in its beginnings was a device of rulers to keep the ruled-over in check by the terrors of the world to come; whilst another school of philosophers tells us that religion was “evolved” as a pretty pastime when society had advanced so far as to possess a leisured class in want of something to fill up its time and thoughts.

The absurdity of both theories is evident when we bring ourselves face to face with early times. Religion proceeded neither from a ruling nor a leisured class—it is the child neither of statecraft nor of luxury, but of stern necessity. It springs from the most universal, most imperative needs of human nature. Statesmanship made use of religion, luxury embellished its outward forms; but religion itself was in existence before either the one or the other. The facts disclosed by the nature of the land, and the other fact that human nature has ever been the same, are of themselves sufficient to teach us this, that in Greece, at least, religion sprang up among the people. It was simply the cry of the human heart for help against evils with which it was powerless to cope. Imagine a man tossing in his little skiff helplessly amid the breakers, or brought face to face with the horrors of the flood or the earthquake, would such an one want any teacher to bid him cry to the Power that had raised those giant forces and could control them? We trow not. The chieftains or the wise men of the clan might invent a name for the Power—to invent the Power itself, or the instinct which turned to it for help, was beyond them.

We take our stand, then, on a very humble but a very real instinct as the

<sup>1</sup> See under “Poseidon,” *Hellas*, p. 204; also footnote on Poseidon Phytalmios = Plant-nourisher, p. 235.

basis of the Greek religion, the instinct which bade the people look up to the blue heavens as the dwelling of the Great Father, the Giver of all good things.

*Zeus worshipped without Temples or Images.*—Another fact, and one of extreme significance, is that Zeus was worshipped in the earliest times without either temple or image. This is a custom which we may safely regard as a "survival" from times long antecedent to the Aryan Separation or "Aryan" separate existence. We are apt at first, in our fear of idealising truth into what is not truth, to imagine that the freedom of the early period from image-worship is to be accounted for simply by the inability of the people to make or carve images. But that a deeper feeling was at work here, that the early Greeks really had a pious awe of attempting to depict the Unseen God, is, we think, proved by history.

On Ithome, a Peloponnesian mountain with a magnificent, far-reaching prospect, Zeus, the national god of Messenia, was worshipped without temple or image. When the Messenians returned from their last banishment, they brought with them, Pausanias tells us, from Naupactus, a statue of Zeus. This, however, significantly enough, they did not venture to place by the altar on Ithome; it was kept in the house of a priest, chosen annually. The long exile of the race (nearly 800 years had elapsed since the capture of Eira and the end of the second Messenian war) had evidently not dimmed their recollections of the manner in which their forefathers had worshipped the God of heaven (Paus., iv. 33. 27; cf. Bursian, 2, 165).

Again, in Arcadia, on Mount Lycæus, the Mount of Light (whose summit, commanding almost the whole of the Peloponnese, formed a fitting throne for the god of Light), there existed down to the latest times neither temple nor image. This is significant, as the mountain was the centre of the worship of Zeus in Arcadia, and the Arcadians, from their conservative character, may safely be trusted to have kept the traditions. A rude mound of earth served for the altar, and before it, on the east, stood two pillars bearing golden eagles, emblems of the god of the heavens (Paus., viii. 38; Bursian, 2, 235).

But, although the early Greeks had neither temple nor image of their highest god, they regarded, as we know, certain objects as symbolical of him. These were the Lightning, the Eagle, and the Oak-tree. The lightning sceptre of the king of heaven requires no explanation as a symbol; neither does the eagle, the bird which can wing its flight into the blue depths of heaven beyond the reach of human eye. But why the oak? From its majestic appearance as monarch of the forest? Undoubtedly this may have been partly the reason of the choice, but there was another and a deeper reason, to which E. Curtius's eloquent description of Lycæus, the mountain which we have just visited, as the centre of this Arcadian Zeus-worship, shall give us the clue (*Pel.*, i. 299): "With his head resting in and collecting the clouds—with his slopes everywhere hospitable, clad with oaks bearing edible acorns and nourishing plants—with numerous streams springing in all directions from his mighty feet—Mount Lycæus was the most glorious image of the indestructible and beneficial power working in nature, and therefore, according to Pelasgian belief, an image of Zeus himself, who constantly makes his blessings to drop upon the land, and gathers around him the dwellings of men." What better symbol of the Great Father could these poor children of Nature, pressed by hard necessity, find than the tree which, without care or forethought on their part, made provision for them in time of dearth, the tree which, as Hesiod expressly tells us (*Op.*), Zeus had given to the pious and good, "to bear acorns on its summits and bees" (makers of the wild honey, which formed the one luxury of prehistoric times) "in its middle." "The lofty oak of Father



Zeus," as Homer calls it in one passage, was indeed what he calls it in another (*Iliad*, vii. 60; v. 693), *perikallès* = literally, "beautiful all round," good in every sense. The oak was the emblem of beneficence, and therefore it was, in all probability, that the messages of the Father to his earthly children were believed to be whispered amid and by the rustling leaves of the oaks of Dodona to those who could understand and reveal his will.

And just as Father Zeus, before the days of visible representation of images and statues, had his emblems or symbols, so the minor deities had theirs. Some of these emblems—evidently the results of progress of later days, such as the olive of Athena, the laurel of Apollo, the myrtle of Aphrodite, the trident of Poseidon—are either significant and beautiful, or interesting.<sup>1</sup> In early times, however, symbols of a much ruder nature appear to have been used. Hera, *e.g.*, was represented by a plank, Apollo by a pillar, and Pausanias mentions that he saw in the market-place of Phæræ, in Achaia, thirty square stones, each of which bore the name of a deity. These stones, he infers (7, 22), were survivals from times when the Greeks paid the honours due to the gods before unhewn stones instead of statues.<sup>2</sup>

*Evidence of the Monuments.*—To the belief that in the earliest times Zeus ruled alone, and was worshipped without image or temple, the recent excavations both in Greece and Asia Minor bear witness. Neither at Mycenæ, Tiryns, nor Hissarlik (Troy) is there a trace of any building devoted to worship (Adeler in Schliemann's *Tiryns*, v.), although the discovery of altars puts beyond doubt the existence of religious feeling.

Further, there is no indication of idol-worship of home-growth in the pit-graves belonging to the earliest Mycenæan period (Nos. III., IV., and V.) (Schuchhardt, p. 320). The little golden temple models and images with doves point to Astarte and Phœnicia, the sitting figure of Cybele to Phrygia, the ox-heads to Caria. On the other hand, in the pit-graves of the next period (Nos. I., II., and VI.), which may be from fifty to a hundred years later, clay idols, evidently of home manufacture, occur sparingly; whilst on the Acropolis, in the palace, and in the poor graves of the lower city, all belonging to the latest Mycenæan development, such idols abound (Schuchhardt, p. 322).

Again, on the walls of the palace at Mycenæ there is a very curious painting, representing three figures with asses' heads, carrying on their shoulders a long staff, which is passed from one to the other. These figures are probably satyrs, forest demons, supposed to be on their way to the chase; from the staff will be suspended any game which they may catch.<sup>3</sup> On this fresco Schuchhardt has the following comment (327): "These beings had a much greater significance in the older period than later, for it is becoming

<sup>1</sup> The trident of Poseidon especially has tested the ingenuity of interpreters. All shades of meaning have been read into its three prongs, from the triple sovereignty of the world down to the harpooning of fish.

<sup>2</sup> The existence of these symbols in the earliest times has of late years acquired a strange importance in the use which has been made of them by the upholders of the "fetish" theory of the origin of religion—the supposition, that is, that religion took its rise in the fear and dread of, and consequent honour or worship paid to certain objects believed to possess magical powers.

With fetish-worship in general we are not concerned here, but the notion that fetish-worship prevailed amongst the early Greeks is one that cannot be too clearly contradicted. Closely connected, moreover, with "fetish-worship" by certain upholders of the theory is "ancestor-worship," and the existence of this also in early Greece must be emphatically denied.

<sup>3</sup> Similar forms, generally with birds' claws and asses' heads, bearing the products of the chase, are engraved also on the so-called "island gems" which belong to the Mycenæan culture. (Milchhöfer, *Anfänge der Kunst*, No. 44g.)

more and more evident that the religion of the Greeks proceeded from Monotheism, from the worship of Zeus, the sole ruler, to whom all other nature-powers, in just such forms as these mixed beings, were subject."

So far as the mountain and forest gnomes and pixies are concerned, we concur in this interpretation; but it must be borne in mind that the Greeks never caricatured the great nature-powers. A Homer might think himself free to make fun of laughter-loving Aphrodite attempting the heroic, and of blustering Ares playing the coward; but no painter or sculptor would for a moment have thought of depicting either the one or the other save in that "human form divine" which best realised his own conception of beauty or of manly vigour. We are inclined to think that this fresco, together with a tablet also belonging to the palace, and representing two women sacrificing, are the work of foreign artists.

*Summary.*—The first period of the prehistoric religion of Greece, so far as we can trace it in names and monuments, may be well summed up in the eloquent words of E. Curtius (*Hist.*, trans. by Word., i. 51): "The Pelasgi, like their equals among the branches of the Aryan family, the Persians and Germans, worshipped the Supreme God, without images or temples.

"This pure and chaste worship of the godlike Pelasgi is not only preserved as a pious tradition of antiquity, but in the midst of Greece, when it abounded with images and temples, there flamed as of old on the mountains the altars of Him who dwelleth not in temples made with hands. . . . Long, too, the people retained a pious dread of representing the Divine Being under a fixed name, or by symbols recognisable by the senses. For besides the altar of the 'Unknown,' whom Paul acknowledged as the Living God, there stood, here and there in the towns, altars to the 'pure,' the 'great,' the 'merciful' gods; and by far the greater number of the names of the Greek gods are originally mere epithets of the unknown deity."

Aristotle himself recognised in the popular religion of his time relics of something better. The myths, he said, contained the oldest ideas of God and of nature; but this ancient wisdom had been lost and forgotten; fragments only remained, for the conceptions of the primeval age had been pushed into the background by anthropomorphic representations (*Metaph.*, ii. 8).

## NATURE WORSHIP

We now come to the second stage in the Greek religion, that stage of which explanations so many and so diverse have been offered. The best solution of the mystery will be found, we venture to think, in bringing to bear upon this particular experiment the definition of experiments in general given by a great philosopher. "An experiment," said Bacon, "is a question put to Nature." Link this with St. Paul's *pselaphan*, "the groping in the dark," and we shall understand how the myths arose.

The question put by the old patriarch in his blindness, as he touched the unknown figure kneeling before him, "Art thou indeed my son, my very son?"<sup>1</sup> was repeated in its essence by these first thinkers to each great elementary power in nature—the great and strong wind, the earthquake, the fire, the sun, the moon, and the dawn.

"Art thou indeed divine? Art thou the child, the very child, of Zeus, our Father in the heavens?"

<sup>1</sup> 1 Kings xix. 11 *et seq.*



And the answer seems to come back, "Yea!" and was believed, for it had in it an element of truth.

*The Active Principle of Nature.*—We fail to see indeed how, in the early stage of human thought, any other answer could suffice. Let us imagine a visitor arriving upon our earth from some planet governed by natural laws other than those in operation here. Let such an one watch the sudden transition in a southern climate from the gloom of winter to the luxuriance of the spring-time, the trees hiding themselves beneath their "leafy tresses," the dark earth sending forth green shoots, the shoots sending forth in turn buds and blossoms, snowy or many-coloured, the blossoms changing into glowing fruit. What conclusion could our visitor come to than that earth, trees, blossoms, were divine; that a divine force, *i.e.* a force infinitely surpassing anything which he himself could devise or accomplish, was at work within? It is only our own familiarity with such phenomena that blinds us to the constant miracle going on before our eyes.

*Religion and Mythology.*—The rise of mythology, then, seems to have been an absolute necessity, a phase which must be passed through if human faculties were to be developed to the full. It formed a part of the discipline of the seeking. Men were to use the powers of the intellect and of the imagination, to listen to the impulse which bade them seek for the great First Cause of life, to follow out the instinct which made them love the beautiful—in a word, to put forth on every side a tentative hand and feel after God, if haply they might find Him.

That these seekers made grievous mistakes, that they often took sweet for bitter and bitter for sweet, is not this just what is to be expected from gropers in the dark?

"Yes," says a reader; "but where is the necessity for the groping? Why did not the Great Father reveal Himself fully to the world at once?"

Who knoweth the mind of the Lord, or who hath been His counsellor?

May not the reason have been simply that the world was not prepared to receive the revelation? Man must come to the very limit of his own powers before God can step in, and that limit was not reached until every human faculty had been developed to the utmost. This is a necessary consequence of the free-will wherewith God has endowed His creatures at the outset. God respects and respected man's free-will, and therefore, if we may venture to use an "anthropomorphic" expression, God stood aside, gave man freest scope for all his powers, and watched the progress of the experiment.

The attitude of God throughout is one of waiting. As St. Paul says: "The times of this ignorance God overlooked."<sup>1</sup> He passed over the mistakes, the misrepresentations of Himself, for the sake of the fifty, or the forty, or the thirty, or the twenty, or the ten real seekers after Him to be found among the nations of antiquity.<sup>2</sup>

To suppose, however, that God, the Moral Ruler of the universe, could suffer Himself to be put aside entirely by His creatures, were to make a mistake as grievous as any committed by those early myth-makers. Such a conception of our God, the Judge of all the earth, is impossible. God was not far from any one of those to whom He gave the right of free-will and freedom of choice and of action, and again and again, in the history of antiquity, we see His power put forth unmistakably to readjust the moral balance disturbed by the pretensions of the creature, and vindicate His own cause—the cause of justice and of truth. God never withdrew Himself entirely; the stream of religion—of that which unites man to his God—flows throughout the whole of antiquity just as

<sup>1</sup> Acts xvii. 30.

<sup>2</sup> Gen. xviii. 23, *et seq.*

certainly as does the stream of mythology. Generally the course of each is distinctly marked. Sometimes the two streams join and flow together, for God could use a myth in ancient days to convey a divine truth, as, later, He could use a parable.

What we propose to do in the following pages is to follow, as best we can, the course of the divine stream, the stream of true religious thought among the Greeks, and to separate it as far as possible from the encroachments of mythology.

This being our object, the myths can receive here only such attention as is necessary for our purpose. The reader, however, will find the subject fully treated in the companion volume, to which (or to some other work, such as Mr. Murray's admirable manual) we refer him for details. Apart from religious considerations altogether, Greek mythology represents a great and, in some respects, most beautiful experiment or series of experiments, and one, the study of which is indispensable, not only because it is the record of a stage of human thought which, from the nature of things, can never repeat itself, but also on account of the manner in which it has been interwoven into the literature of all succeeding times—our own literature not excepted.

*Anthropomorphism.*—Now there were two ways in which it was open to primitive man to represent the beings whom he conceived of as existing in Nature—he could give them the forms which he saw around him in the animal world, or he could enshrine them in the image of man.

The Greeks, as we know, chose the latter, and indisputably the nobler alternative. They alone of all ancient peoples had a presentiment of the fact that man was made in the image of God. It was because they dimly felt the truth of this that they reversed the saying, and made their gods in the image of man. The Moloch of the Phœnicians was represented with a human figure indeed, but a bull's head. The Egyptian Ptah, the supreme god, "the only unbegotten begetter in the heaven and on the earth; the god who made himself to be god, who exists by himself," as he is described on a pillar of Memphis (now in the Museum at Berlin) (De Rougé, *Revue Archéol.*, 1860, i. 357). This deity of creation and the beginning is depicted on the monuments with a beetle on his shoulders in place of a human head. The highest god of the Greeks alone appears in all the majesty of the human form in the grand Ideal of Pheidias, the Zeus of Olympia.

We are yet, however, a long way from Pheidias, and the question may not unreasonably be asked: Did not the Hellenes themselves pass through that phase of animal worship which is seen in the religions of other peoples? Animals, with their keen senses, their early independence, their wonderful powers of self-preservation, must have excited in no small degree the admiration of primitive man—himself so utterly defenceless against the forces of nature, against even the sharp "snow-arrows" of the winter.

We know, it may be urged, that among the things unearthed by Dr. Schliemann at Mycenæ (*Mycenæ*, p. 105, *et seq.*) are little images of cows, signet-rings stamped with a cow-head, &c.<sup>1</sup> We know also that in the *Iliad*, Athena and Apollo are represented as sitting in the form of vultures on the lofty oak of Father Zeus to watch the combat between Hector and Ajax (*Iliad*, vii. 60), and in the *Odyssey*, again, Athena flies up to the roof-timbers of the hall of Odysseus in the form of a swallow to watch the slaying of the suitors (*Od.*, xxii. 240). Again, may not certain Homeric epithets, e.g. *glaukopis* (owl-eyed, or bright-eyed), as applied to Athena, *bo-opis* (cow-eyed), as applied to Hera and

<sup>1</sup> The cow is the symbol of the horned moon, and as such of Io, the Argive priestess of Hera, or it may be of Hera herself.



others—have had their origin in this way? Must we not deduce from these facts that the Greeks associated animals in some way with their gods?

Undoubtedly, but only as symbols, or as forms, which the gods could assume at pleasure. We must not confound a temporary “metamorphosis” with an “incarnation.” Of an animal-worship such as existed in Egypt there is not a trace in Greece. From this degradation the Greek was saved, by a principle which, although only expressed in words to our knowledge at a very much later period, must nevertheless have been active from the first. To the early as to the later Greek, “man” was “the measure of all things.” That an upward-looker could consent to measure himself by the animals was impossible. In that Ode of Sophocles, the grand ode from the *Antigone* to which we have so often already referred, man is described as showing his supremacy, not only by making his way across the stormy deep, not only by inventing language and oratory, but by taming the never-tamed ox of the mountain. The Egyptians might bow down to the bull Apis—the Hellene threw a yoke over his neck. The Egyptians continued their animal worship to the end. The Hellenes emerged even from the “metamorphic” stage as a butterfly from its chrysalis. The gods are metamorphosed in Homer—never in *Æschylus* or in Sophocles.

*Extent of Personification.*—The tendency to personification was at all times a living force among the Greeks. They personified, at this early period, every element, well-nigh every physical feature in nature, as at a later period they personified every quality of the mind, every virtue of the citizen.

It is not our intention to linger over Greek achievements in this way; but a brief *résumé* may be acceptable to those who have as yet formed no precise idea of the extent to which personification was carried.

“The immortals” were not the creation either of Homer or of Hesiod. Some of them, as we have seen, travelled into Greece with the Aryans from the Old Home; others grew up among the mountains, in lonely forest glens, by river-banks, and on the sea. To enumerate all the wondrous beings by whom the Greeks fancied the world peopled would outrun our space, since every phenomenon, every changeful feature, even in earth, sky, and sea, had its appropriate, divine representative. Let us, however, take a glance at these bright beings, and let us note in passing that they are more numerous than would appear from Homer. The Father of Poetry is no catalogue-maker, he is an artist who simply takes what he needs out of the existing whole for the purpose in hand. For our purpose, however, a catalogue is necessary, and we shall not scruple, therefore, to introduce into it beings whom we know from sources other than Homeric, since the mere fact of their not being mentioned by Homer does not warrant us in assuming that they were not known to him.<sup>1</sup>

(1) To begin, then, with the heavens, the serene upper air is the abode of the Heaven-father, Zeus; the gleaming lower air, agitated by every passing wind-current, is represented by his consort, “gusty-tempered,” white-armed Hera; the pure, bright æther by his daughter, bright-eyed Athena. The dawn is rosy-fingered Eos, brilliant in saffron robe and chariot, drawn by glancing steeds; the faint light that steals across the sky to announce her approach is her husband, Tithonus, a grey old man, weary of the burden of an immortality robbed of youth, the changeful twilight now living, now dying, has its representative in the love of the Dioscuri, the twin-brothers who dwell alternately beneath the dark earth and in the golden house of heaven.

The sun, wandering on high in his splendour, is Hyperion; riding across

<sup>1</sup> In our catalogue we have followed the interpretation which best suits the current myths about the divinity in question. There are, however, in several cases, nearly as many interpretations as commentators (see *Hellas*, under the different articles).

the heavens in his glittering chariot, he is Helios. Shooting forth his glowing arrows, now in goodwill, now in wrath, he is the pure sunlight, the far-darter, golden-haired Apollo. Struggling against the powers of desolation and the monsters of darkness, he is the demi-god Heracles, or the hero Perseus, or the Lycian Bellerophon. Scorching, devouring his own offspring, he is Tantalus; perpetually ascending and descending, he is Sisyphus; chained to his daily task, he is Ixion; sinking into the western waters, he is Endymion.

The vault of heaven itself, firm and steadfast, is the ancient Aryan Uranus; the dark heaven, calm and peaceful, is the gentle Leto, "ever ready to forgive and forget;" the glittering starry firmament is Asteria.

The bright lady of the heavens, the moon-orb, is Selene; the wandering, changeful moon is unhappy, persecuted Io; the silvery moon-rays, darting through the clear air, are shot by the huntress Artemis; the faint moon-beams, peering down on lonely cross-roads and through the straggling forest boughs, betoken the nearness of awesome Hecate.

Each star has a story to tell: the Great Bear is an Arcadian princess; the Little Bear is her son; near them watches the fierce hunter Orion, with his fiercer dog Sirius, eager to chase the seven Pleiades, who go on with their circling dance, secure that he can never reach them. One of the Pleiades has fallen from her place and wanders through the heavens with dishevelled locks as a comet; she is Electra, mother of the Dardanian race, distraught with grief at the fall of Troy. Iris, the rainbow, with head in the heavens and feet on earth, is the Messenger of Zeus; Hermes, the wing-shod musical Breeze, is his Herald; in the black thunder-cloud the Erinyes stand ready at his command to pursue the evil-doer, and lash him with their scourge, the writhing lightning. The roaring wind and conflict of the elements is furious Ares, bane of mortals, god of war; the balmy west wind, wedded to Chloris the flowery Spring, is Zephyrus; an audacious fellow with streaming locks is Boreas, the north-wind, carrying off the Mist-Maiden Oreithyia; still fiercer and more rapacious are the never-to-be-satisfied, always-ready-for-mischief Harpies, the Whirlwinds.

(2) Then if we turn to the Sea—that realm which is distinctly Hellenic—what a superabundance of vigorously-conceived images rise from out its misty depths! The monarch of all, choleric and unrelenting as the deep itself, is Poseidon, the dark-haired Earth-Shaker; the sighing of the sea is his consort, "much-moaning Amphitrite, the gentle Nereid compelled against her will to wed the gruff sea-king. The Dawn, rising out of the foam with splendour far surpassing that of rosy-fingered Eos on earth, is Aphrodite, goddess of Beauty.

The mobile play of the waters, ever-changing, never at rest, is Proteus of many forms. The calm, friendly deep, willingly lending his broad back for the service of men, is Nereus, the Aged Man of the Sea, trusty and truthful; the waves, sparkling in the sunlight, and the other charms of the peaceful sea, are his fifty daughters, Amphitrite the Sea-Queen, silver-footed Thetis, mother of Achilles, Galatea, beloved of the giant, one-eyed Polyphemus, and the hapless Acis—and their sisters, who dance on the silvery sands, and dwell beneath the deep in glittering caverns.

The keeper of the Sea-Winds is Æolus, who has his home in a steep rock-bound isle, where his six lusty sons, the strong gales, and his six daughters, the milder breezes, keep up a perpetual feast of boisterous merriment. The shrill blast that whistles through sails and cordage and betokens the coming storm, is Triton, son of the sea-king, as he blows on his shell-horn, and orders out winds and waves to the contest. The white foam that crests the waves after a



storm has passed is Ino, the daughter of Theban Cadmus, now a goddess, Leucothea, with her son Palæmon, the succourer of mariners.

The doleful moan that strikes terror to the heart of the sailor, cowering in the night in the hold of his ship, is the voice of the unfortunate Glaucus, as he makes the circuit of the Ægæan in his huge battered old body, and laments that he cannot die.

The wild, cruel sea, with its mysterious depths and grey dimly-lit caverns tenanted by creatures fierce and uncouth, is pictured in Phorkys and Keto and their offspring. The whirlpool, gurgling and sucking in its prey, is Scylla—once a lovely maiden, now a six-headed monster—yelping and fishing for her food; gulping down the black water and spouting it forth with a mighty roar, it is Charybdis. The sunken rocks on which many a vessel has struck are the playground of the Sirens, who have lured the witless mariner on to his destruction.

(3) Nor is Earth herself—that glorious land of mountain and forest—less fertile in bringing forth images of truth and beauty. The Great Mother, Earth, has many representatives—broad-bosomed Gæa, parent of gods and Titans and Men; law-abiding Thetis, mother of the Horæ, the Seasons, bringing in, in their order, both blossoms and fruits; turret-crowned Rhea (the Phrygian Cybele, the Mountain-Mother), mother of cities, “mother of the gods” *par excellence*, of the reigning deities of Olympus:—all these we see, and others besides, paling before the highest embodiment of motherly love, golden-haired Demeter—now black-robed, narcissus-wreathed, mourning for her daughter—now glorious in her beauty, light-glancing, crowned with the wheat-ears, the “corns of wheat” that testify to the triumph of life over death.

By her stands Cora-Persephone, the Daughter, the Maiden, herself a rosebud, snatched away by loathsome Hades, king of terrors, “famous for horses”—those dread horses that are blacker than the night and swifter than the wind—who bears her below to the regions of darkness, to re-appear again, violet-tressed, a marvel to gods and men, in the beauty of spring.

By the Mother and the Daughter stands vine-garlanded Dionysus, son of the Lightning, god of the fertility of autumn, with his sleeping bride Ariadne, the dying blossoms of the spring.

In the forest to the Hellene every object was full of life. Every tree had its Dryad or its Hamadryad, growing with its growth, sometimes dying with its death, trembling or indignant at the touch of the woodman's axe. The fallen pinetree tells the story of Pitys; the silver poplars with their shining leaves say plainly that they are Heliades, daughters of the sun; the roses red and white—the anemones too—have sprung from the blood of Adonis and the tears of Aphrodite; the hyacinth and the juniper send forth their fragrance because they were once beloved of the glowing sun-god; the humble mint owes its perfume to the fact that it was trodden underfoot of a goddess. When the trees of the forest rustle, the Nymphs are dancing hard by; when the wind pipes shrilly overhead, they are fleeing from the odious goat-horned Satyrs; when there is perfect stillness, and the lonely traveller, threading his way amid the thick underwood, hears no sound but the crackling of the leaves beneath his feet, the eerie feeling that creeps over him is the work of Pan, who will shortly make him take to his heels in a pan-ic. When he has fairly got beyond the reach of the frolicsome shepherd-god and emerged into the open, he is still surrounded by the unseen. The mountain-echo still laments for Narcissus, the meadow-nymphs for Eurydike.

Every cave has its guardian-nymphs who, clad in purple, sit weaving the green mantle of earth. Every running brook, every spring, has its deity—its

purifying, sparkling, exhilarating muse; every river its lordly reed-crowned prince, benign and beneficent, or blustering and boisterous, as the case may be, and the character of his stream will clearly reveal.

If we wend our way to the homes and haunts of men, we do not leave the Nature-power behind: Hestia glows in the pure flame on the hearth; Hephæstus directs the labours of the craftsman; Prometheus, at the cost of ages of suffering, has won for the children of men the means of enduring existence. The Charites, the three lovely Sister Graces, are there to make that existence a sweet and joyous thing, to refine by their presence the pleasures of life.

Such were some of the ways, great and small, in which the Hellenes depicted the Unseen, as they conceived it to exist on every side. Nor does our little catalogue by any means exhaust the list. There still remain many personifications of physical phenomena necessarily passed over here, for which we must refer the reader to the companion volume on mythology. There remains also that still more wonderful class of personifications,—those relating to conscience and the moral world, which, as belonging properly to our present subject, will engage our attention later on. Meantime, our catalogue, brief as it is, is significant enough. It has shown us:—

(1) The wide range of personification and the extremely varied nature of the Greek myths. It follows from these two characteristics that no one key, no one mode of interpretation, will fit all the myths; neither the "Dawn," nor the "Solar," nor the "Storm-cloud," nor the "Survival," nor the "Geographical," nor any other single theory ever put forward will give us a clue to the entire meaning of the Greek mythology. We want every one of these theories in its own place; but no single one is applicable to all the myths or to more than a limited section of them.

The reason of this is evident. The Greek myths grew up during many centuries, under widely-varying conditions, and must have been the work of many minds differing intrinsically from one another. They grew up, moreover, in days when painting was not, when sculpture was not, when science, when history was not. Any one, therefore, who had a thought,—whether true, or beautiful, or merely out of the common—was obliged, if the creative instinct within urged him to give utterance to his thought, to wrap it in the form of a story<sup>1</sup> in order that he might find an audience.

Greek mythology, therefore, represents to us as a whole the *earliest Greek literature*, sacred and secular. It is a mistake to imagine that the content of the myths is wholly religious. Some myths indeed had from the beginning, and some developed, a truly religious and divine character; but others are simply beautiful with the beauty of nature. Some myths are pathetic with an intensely human pathos; others are allegorical tales, or simply *Mährchen*, which seem to be the common property of all mankind, as, *e.g.*, some of the myths of the *Odyssey*. A few of the later myths (such as those in Hesiod, undoubtedly borrowed from foreign sources when the home mythopœic fountain had become exhausted) are either grotesque or absolutely repulsive.

To take then the whole range of Greek personification, and cry: "Behold the Greek religion!" is an error. It is, as we have said, wiser and more in accordance with facts to regard the myths collectively as representing the earliest literature.

<sup>1</sup> "Only the People can make a Mythos." "The People can make a Mythos *only*." "No intellectual activity of any primitive people has come down to us except such as is preserved in the form of Myth and Saga." (K. O. Muller, *Die Minyer*, p. 1145; cf. O. Gruppe, *Culten und Mythen*, p. 61.)



(2) When we think, secondly, of the wealth of fancy lavished upon the myths, and still more of the extraordinary manner in which some mental quality is interwoven into the very texture, as it were, of the physical basis, so that the representative of a *nature-force* became the embodiment of a *moral* or *intellectual* power, we stand amazed. How the process was effected remains a mystery. "Let no one imagine," says Welcker (i. p. 230), "that with all his thinking he will ever unravel the whole puzzle. The nature-power is the chrysalis enwrap't by the mythical threads; from these it emerges a divine-human person." So complete is the transformation that the physical basis has all but disappeared. When the later Greek thought of Apollo, or Athena, or Demeter, he thought not of the sunlight, or the dawn, or the æther, or the earth, but of poetry and intellectual energy, and the great mother. To those who have studied the Greek mythology there is little exaggeration in Welcker's declaration (i., p. 230) that "in comparison with the great *deed* of Greek intellect, the calling into existence of these gods, the voyage of the *Argo* and the Trojan war, yea, and the songs which celebrated that war, are but the *plays* of a nation strong in the strength of youth."

*Moral Ideas: Sin and Sacrifice.*—At the present day, the favourite mode of viewing the period during which the myths arose, expresses itself in that most convenient of phrases, "the childhood of the world." We very much doubt whether, so far as the Greeks are concerned, there ever was a "childhood" in the sense in which the phrase is apt to be construed. Granted that in some ways primitive man, with his limited stock of knowledge, may be truly compared to a child, yet the comparison does not hold good throughout. Hence no idea is more calculated to mislead us than this "childhood of the world" phrase, and Gruppe has done good service by protesting against its abuse (p. 199). Man, in his primitive state, and the child have hardly anything in common except this—that both go to work within a small circle of ideas. The modes in which they respectively widen the circle, however, are diametrically opposed. Primitive man (and also the savage, in so far as he does not come into contact with civilised races) can only emerge from his ignorance by *productive activity*—one experiment leading on to another—whereas the attitude of the child, to whom the results of this activity are presented ready-made, is essentially *receptive*.

We shall see the truth of these remarks if we call to mind what we know of the Greeks before they could have been subjected to foreign influences. Think of the wondrous development of the language—both of the mother-tongue by the united Aryans and of Greek by the Greeks—of the endurance, foresight, and ingenuity needed to cope with Nature in a country like Greece; of the migrations of the tribes, the "colonising" of Hellas, the mother-country itself; think of all these factors, and it will become evident that the prehistoric Greeks could not have been "children" in any true sense of the word. They were compelled by the necessity of self-preservation to use their judgment and their reasoning powers, and that they did use both the result proves. Nor can we think that in the moral realm the phrase is more appropriate. St. Paul's "groping in the dark" is far more truthful. The prehistoric period was a stern time, by no means the "golden age" of the poets. The hardships to be endured were great, and in due proportion, doubtless, were the cruelties perpetrated. Life itself was held cheap; children were the absolute property of the father, to be exposed or saved alive at his good pleasure; the blood-feud, the duty of revenge, was a sacred obligation. Nevertheless, these "gropers" did grope; they did not live on in moral apathy—they did strive both to see the light and do the right. It was in these dark, hard times that the development of the

moral ideas, which we shall shortly see in Homer, took place. The Themistes, the grand natural laws that keep together the social order, expanded to embrace a wider circle, and took deeper root at home; Dike, justice, the "way pointed out" by the better self, was more implicitly followed by that self; Eteon, truth, the thing which *is*, separated itself more clearly from its shadow, the thing which is not. In a word, amid all the marching and counter-marching of the tribes, amid all the harshnesses and barbarities of the period, the foundations, the ethical bases of all true social life, were being slowly but surely laid. These foundations, the Themistes of Zeus, still echo for us in the words of Sophocles (*Oed. Tyr.*, 863 *et seq.*; Bergk, 330):—

"Those laws of range sublime, called into life throughout the high clear heaven, whose father is Olympus alone; their parent was no race of mortal men, no, nor shall oblivion ever lay them to sleep; the god is mighty in them, and he grows not old" (Jebb).

The idea of sin, in so far as it can be traced in the old sagas, was, of course, confined to the transgression of those great elementary natural laws.

The stories of Tantalus, Sisyphus, and Ixion, of Athamas and Lycaon, of Orestes and Ædipus, all sprang up during this period. We know them, of course, only in later forms, but, one and all, they involved primarily the notion of moral guilt, and of punishment as an inevitable consequence of that guilt. There can be little doubt that some of the actors in these stories (as, *e.g.*, the first three named, the great sinners undergoing punishment in Homer's lower world) were originally personifications of physical phenomena; but, once personified, they became types of human sin, the shedding of innocent blood, presumption, bad faith, and ingratitude.

With the sagas of Athamas and Lycaon is associated human sacrifice, a practice which Gruppe takes to be of comparatively late origin (Gruppe, p. 139), inasmuch as it is not mentioned either in the oldest portions of the *Veda* or in Homer. We may, perhaps, consider the first portion of the prehistoric epoch in Greece to have been free from it. The Greeks probably learned the practice from the Phœnicians; but it must have spread rapidly, inasmuch as we find it connected with the cults of Zeus, Artemis, and Dionysus.

Horrible as the custom is, it accords only too well with what we know of primitive notions. Human life in early times was invested with no such sanctity as clings around it now. Contradictory as it seems to us, moreover, the practice may have originated in a good intention. "The nobler the victim, the more honouring to the god," would seem to have been the motive, leavened often enough, no doubt, as in the case of prisoners of war, by feelings of revenge and race-antipathies. A long period of development, and of that moral experimenting which we call "reasoning," had to be gone through before social customs were softened so that the Greek could argue from himself to his God, and see that if the sacrifice of a human being was revolting to *him*, it must be infinitely more so to the Being whom he worshipped as superior to himself.

That the Hellenes did eventually come to see this is one point in which, as compared with neighbouring nations, they showed their greatness. The Phœnicians never saw it; they were quite content to sit down in the darkness, to go on century after century sacrificing to Moloch, in their selfish blindness, holocausts of infants. Their conception of the deity never rose higher than that he took pleasure in such proceedings, whereas the Hellenes, the upward-lookers, came to regard the practice with horror. Even amongst them it lingered on in remote places, as in the Arcadian cult of the Lycæan Zeus, far into historic times (*Paus.*, viii. 38); but the Arcadians were centuries behind



their brethren in the march of civilisation. Gradually the more enlightened races of Hellas abolished the practice, substituting for the innocent human victim a criminal who had deserved death, an animal, or a scourging voluntarily borne, as in the cult of Artemis Laphria in Sparta. True, during the Persian wars, in an outbreak of popular excitement, we find prisoners sacrificed to Dionysus Omestes, but the practice was utterly repugnant to true Hellenic feeling, and in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C., throughout the greater part of Hellas it gradually died out.

In such an age, however, as one that could sanction human sacrifice, if the shadows are black, the light that breaks through them here and there is by contrast all the brighter. Such a light we have in the practice of self-sacrifice. The sagas of the voluntary death of Iphigenia, of Macaria, of Mœnœceus, of Codrus, of the daughters of Erechtheus, with other similar legends, leave no doubt that these early Hellenes—these gropers in the dark—recognised and understood the great law of sacrifice. The essence and root of all these sagas is the voluntary offering up of the one for the many, of the individual for the fatherland. No one has better caught the spirit that breathes in the action than a poet of our own time. The following noble lines are put by Lord Tennyson into the mouth of Tiresias, the Seer who, in the old saga of the War of the Seven against Thebes, had predicted that the voluntary death of Mœnœceus, a scion of the royal house, was necessary to ensure the victory to the Theban arms:—

“My son,” says the Seer—

“No sound is breathed so potent to coerce,  
And to conciliate, as their names who dare  
For that sweet motherland which gave them birth  
Nobly to do, nobly to die. Their names,  
Graven on memorial columns, are a song  
Heard in the future; few, but more than wall  
And rampart, their examples reach a hand  
Far thro’ all years, and everywhere they meet  
And kindle generous purpose, and the strength  
To mould it into action pure as theirs.”

Had these old sagas—the story of the self-devotion of a Mœnœceus, of an Iphigenia, a Macaria, aught to do with the “generous purpose” that shone forth so gloriously at Thermopylæ, at Salamis, at Plateæ?—Verily, we think so.

## § V.—THE HOMERIC AGE.<sup>1</sup>

### I.—THE SUPREMACY OF ZEUS.

By the time we come to know the Greeks in Homer, they had been engaged for centuries in making countless experiments—putting “Questions to Nature,” and receiving answers—watching the ups and downs of life and drawing conclusions therefrom. The result of all these experiments embodies itself in the practical experience which takes shape in Homer. This experience may be expressed in three definite statements:—

1. The Greeks had found out that a great Power controls the operations of Nature.

2. They had also found out that there is a great Power in the world which makes for righteousness.

3. They had found out, further, that both Powers were centred in One being, to whom they gave the highest name known to them, that of Zeus, god of Light, the great Father in the Heavens.

In order to prove these assertions, we must ask the reader to examine with some patience the various passages which bear upon the question. This is indispensable to a clear understanding—not only of the religion of the Homeric period, but of that of after ages, for the whole train of later Greek religious thought turns upon Homer—his ideas are either accepted or rejected by the later Greeks. Hence it is absolutely essential to know what Homer's ideas were. We may note in passing, that the question as to the origin of the Homeric poems does not affect our argument. Whether they are made up of single lays, the work of several individuals, or are the product of one thinking brain, matters not. Morally the two poems, *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, are permeated by one and the same kind of spirit.

The influence of Homer on his countrymen it is almost impossible to exaggerate; even a Plato could not withdraw himself from it. Despite the grand developments which took place later—the working out of the idea of the state, the rise and progress of philosophy—despite the many factors which might have weakened or dissipated this influence—he was no true Greek who did not in his heart of hearts acknowledge allegiance to Homer (*cf.* Schmidt, *Ethik*, i. 3).

#### I. Zeus supreme over Nature—

From all time, storm and tempest have been regarded as manifestations of the power of the Deity. Thunder and lightning revealed the coming of JEHOVAH to His ancient people,<sup>2</sup> and among polytheistic races they have invariably been conceived of as attributes of the highest god alone. At the approach of the Thunder-God darkness veils the earth, the sea is agitated, the mountains tremble; lightning and the crashing of the winds alike announce the presence of the great king. But no sooner does the mighty “pulse-throb” which has thus convulsed all Nature subside, than showers of blessing descend to quicken and refresh, peace and serenity are restored. Thunder is thus an

<sup>1</sup> The sections under this head are mainly based on Welcker's *Griechische Gotterlehre*.

<sup>2</sup> Exodus xix. 16.



emblem of goodness as well as of power, and in both senses it is an attribute of Zeus. He is the "Lord of the Lightning" and "rejoices in the thunder"; dread is the thunderbolt of great Zeus.

The lightning-sceptre of Zeus was the mark of his world sovereignty. It is his most universal symbol early and late, and appears as such on the coins of the Locrians and of many towns. The many beautiful epithets applied to Zeus in Homer—the Cloud Gatherer, Cloud Compeller, Cloud-Enwrap, the High-Thundering, the Lightener, &c., &c.—are not to be considered as poetic imagery only, but as refrains from the religious hymns of former centuries.

Rain, also, is in the gift and power of Zeus; when he lightens, he pours forth hail and snow on the fields (*Iliad*, x. 5-7); he sends the whirlwind (*Iliad*, xii. 252); he spreads forth the tempest (*Iliad*, xvi. 365); he sets the rainbow in the clouds (*Iliad*, xi. 27), the bright rainbow from heaven to be a sign unto man (*Iliad*, xvii. 547); it is he also who made Æolus to be keeper of the winds (*Od.*, x. 21). The years are from great Zeus (*Iliad*, ii. 134).

*Zeus on the Mountain-tops.*—We have noted in a previous section that well-nigh every lofty mountain in Greece was sacred to Zeus, and although we hesitate to assign to the earliest times all the meaning that might be read into this fact, yet we think there can be little doubt that, to the Greek of the Homeric Age, the association of Zeus with the loftiest mountain-peaks had in it something specially significant. The mere sense of dependence on the rain-god has passed into the sense of reverence for the supreme god.

Throughout the *Iliad*, whenever Zeus is specially sought for, the refrain runs: "And they found him tarrying apart by himself," either on the top-most peak of many-ridged Olympus, or on Gargarus, the highest crest of many-fountained Ida. From the mountains Zeus surveys the world; on Ida is his domain and fragrant altar (*Iliad*, viii. 47); from a cleft of Olympus he beholds the Achæan and Trojan hosts (*Iliad*, xx. 22). It has been urged that the reason why Zeus is represented as dwelling perpetually on the mountain-tops, is that, on his mythological side, he represents the heavens, and must be, therefore, immovable. Such an idea of Father Zeus would never have entered Homer's mind. This is evident from the whole tenor of the poem. Zeus moves about freely like the other gods; he goes to attend a feast of the Æthiopians, and spends his time either in Olympus or on the heights of Ida, as he chooses: "Then did the father of men and of gods sit him down on the crests of Ida, rich in springs, from Heaven descending with the lightning in his hands" (*Iliad*, i. 423). That he does not communicate personally with men, is simply because it is not necessary. The other gods are obliged to appear in a bodily shape of some sort when they would help their favoured heroes; Zeus has but to will, and the help is effectual. We read that when the Father sends the Far-Darter to rescue the dying Hector, Apollo finds the hero sitting up, no longer lying, "for," says the poet, "he had but lately gathered in his life, and knew the comrades around him; but his gasping and his sweat had ceased from the moment when the will of ægis-bearing Zeus revived him." Thus the bodily presence of Zeus is not necessary to the carrying out of his will—a belief which seems to be a lingering tradition of the oldest faith concerning the invisible God, who dwelleth not in temples made with hands. On other occasions Zeus sends Iris or Hermes to make known his pleasure to men, a feature directly traceable to the feeling of reverence due to the father of gods and of men.

In depicting Zeus, therefore, as enthroned upon the heights of Ida, "encircled by a fragrant cloud as by a crown" (*Iliad*, xv. 152), Homer is only giving expression to the deepest feelings of his age.

*Zeus in Relation to the Gods.*—The relation of Zeus to Nature is, moreover, shown in his relations to the gods, all of whom, let us bear in mind, had originally a physical basis, and were simply the elemental powers of Nature. In Homer, Zeus is no longer alone. King of a brilliant court, he rules in Olympus; the greatest of the Nature-powers are united to him by close ties as consort, sons and daughters, brothers and sisters; whilst the minor powers come to do him homage.

Of the mode in which, by the inevitable tendency of mythological development, Zeus was provided with a father and mother, we have already spoken. Zeus deprives his father, Kronos, "of the crooked counsels," of power; but by a further development of the myth, he himself draws lots with the other two sons of Kronos, Poseidon and Hades, for the sovereignty of the world. The hoary sea falls to Poseidon; the "murky darkness" beneath, the abode of the dead, to Hades; the wide heaven, in æther and clouds, to Zeus; whilst earth and high Olympus remain common ground. Yet Zeus, as the eldest, is supreme ruler in all three domains.

Poseidon, the irascible, mutinies more than once; but he is always brought to his senses by the thought of the superior might of Zeus. "No whit will I walk after the mind of Zeus," he declares on one occasion when he has just been relating the story of the partition of the world by lot. "Better were it for him to threaten with terrible words his daughters and his sons whom himself begat, and who will perforce listen to what he commands!" Nevertheless, with all his valour, a hint from Iris, the Messenger of Zeus, suffices to send Poseidon quietly to the depths of the salt sea (*Iliad*, xv. 187 *et seq.*).

Another time Poseidon himself says to the headstrong consort of Zeus: "Hera, what speech is this! (The counselling of rebellion.) It is not I that would wish to see us all at strife with Zeus Kronion, for he is stronger far" (*Iliad*, viii. 209). And again, the famous Earth-shaker so entirely recognises his position as to unyoke the horses from the car of his suzerain (*Iliad*, viii. 440).

That this division was of late introduction, that Zeus, even in the days of image making, was looked upon as sole ruler, is evident from the Xoanon (or ancient wooden image) of Zeus Triopas, the Three-eyed Zeus, mentioned by Pausanias as preserved on the Larissa at Argos (ii. 24-5). This was supposed to have been part of the Trojan booty, the image of Zeus Patrous on the altar to which old Priam fled for refuge, said to have been brought to Argos by Ithenebus.

The three statues of Zeus in the market-place at Corinth (seen by Pausanias, ii. 2) probably also represented the three domains. So that, from first to last, the ancient belief in the All-father seems to have maintained its supremacy over the myth of the division of the world-sovereignty. To return, however, to Homer.<sup>1</sup>

Naturally, if Zeus bears sway thus over father and brothers, his authority will be supreme over the other gods, his children and subjects. To the whole god-world, then, he stands in the relation of father and ruler—the idea of fatherhood, however, predominating over that of sovereignty.

To discover the great importance attached to the word "father" and all that it implies in early Greek religious thought, we have only to turn over the pages of Homer and note how often he uses the phrase, "Father of gods and men," or the invocation "Father Zeus!" in contradistinction to the formal "O King! O Lord!" Not to multiply instances, we recall how Athena, addressing him in a solemn agora or assembly, says, in the name of all the gods, "Our Father

<sup>1</sup> On two ancient gems also a Zeus Triopas is engraved (Panofka, quoted by Welcker, *Griechische Gotterlehre*, i. p. 162).



Kronides, first of lords!" (*Iliad*, viii. 31), and as "Father Zeus" he is appealed to, even by Hera (*Iliad*, xix. 121) and Poseidon (*Iliad*, vii. 446)—the one, in mythological phraseology, his sister-wife, the other his brother. Other examples innumerable will occur to every one familiar with Homer, and in Hesiod we find the same use of the term: in the *Theogony* (47, 457, 838) Zeus is also the father of gods and men.

The first relation in which Zeus stands to the gods is that of Father. The gods are embodiments of the separate powers and qualities which are concentrated in him. The gods flow forth from Zeus—in mythological language they are either his children or his subjects. Intellectually consistent with this conception is it that the goddess Athena, wisdom, springs from his head (although the myth has, of course, a nature basis); and that Apollo is no sooner born than he announces his function as being the revealing to men the will of his father Zeus.

Zeus, however, is not only a Father, but a King and Master. Hence, even Athena, in the passage which we have quoted, beginning "Our father Kronides!" continues, "first of lords," and goes on to add, "Well do we know, even we" (thy children), "that thy might is unyielding." And her address is called forth by the stern declaration of his power which Zeus has just made. He has forbidden the gods to assist either of the contending parties in the war, under pain of chastisement or consignment to Tartarus: "There shall ye know how far I am mightiest of all gods"; and he challenges the whole of them, united, to make trial of his strength. Let them fasten a golden rope from heaven, and endeavour, gods and goddesses, to drag Zeus, supreme counsellor, thence—their utmost force should be unavailing. Let him, on the contrary, but will to put forth his might, and they, yea, and earth and sky, should hang together in mid air from a pinnacle of Olympus. "By so much am I, Zeus, above gods and above men" (*Iliad*, viii. 5-27).

Consistently with this conception of the authority of Zeus he is generally represented as dwelling in solitary majesty, aloof from the crowd of gods. If he condescends to meet them, it is in conclave, summoned by himself. Usually we find him alone, independent of intercourse with others and entirely self-sufficing. Thus, immediately after the Olympian agora referred to, he withdraws in his chariot to "many fountained Ida . . . even to Gargarus, where is his domain and fragrant altar . . . and the father of gods and men sat upon the mountain-tops, rejoicing in his glory" (*Iliad*, viii. 41-51).

In another passage (probably an interpolation) when the gods murmur at his giving glory to the Trojans, we read that: "Of them the Father took no heed. Withdrawn apart from the others, he sat aloof, rejoicing in his glory" (*Iliad*, xi. 80).

There is, of course, another side to the relation of Zeus with the gods. We read of rebellion in Olympus—rebellion which had nearly made an end of the sovereignty of the king (*Iliad*, i. 396 *et seq.*). It must ever be borne in mind, however, that, in the Greek conception, Zeus is not only supreme God, but a god; and it is the union of the religious with the mythological aspects of his character which presents us with so many conflicting statements.

From the foregoing passages it is evident that, as Welcker observes, "to whatever extent the mythical personality of Zeus and the myths of the gods under him developed in the progress of polytheism—one thing is clear, viz.: that the monotheistic character of the religion in its beginning . . . was only encroached upon, not extinguished. Zeus stood alone, above the supernatural gods as, before they were, he stood alone, supreme over Nature" (i. p. 280).

II. Zeus supreme in the moral world.—Zeus, Father of men.—But

Zeus is also father of men, and here again we meet with contradictions, which have their solution in the double character of the Greek conceptions. Here also we must distinguish between the religious and the mythic. The myths, for instance, represent Zeus as hating the whole race of human kind, endeavouring to exterminate them and persecuting them in the person of their champion and representative, Prometheus. But the Greek religious sense, wiser than the myths, looks up to Zeus not only as a father, but as the great Father, to be appealed to in the hour of adversity. He is, indeed, often spoken of simply as the "Father" (*Iliad*, viii. 69; xi. 80; xxii. 209, and others)—no need to indicate further who is meant—no danger that the name will be applied to Poseidon or any other deity. As the father, Zeus is quite distinct from the other gods. Thus Achilles preserves religiously in a coffer "a fair-fashioned goblet, from which no other man was wont to drink bright wine nor was he wont to make libation therewith to any of the gods save to Father Zeus only." The whole passage is interesting as an instance of early worship. "This goblet he took from the coffer and first purified it with brimstone, then he washed it with fair streams of water, and himself washed his hands and drew bright wine. Then, standing in the midst of the court, he prayed. He poured forth the wine, looking up into Heaven. And he was not unmarked by Zeus that rejoiceth in the thunder" (*Iliad*, xvi. 225 *et seq.*).

Again, every reader will recollect the prayer offered up by the unhappy Priam in his anguish, when he is on the eve of setting out to ransom the body of his son, and Hecuba urges him to seek a sign from Kronion of the storm-cloud. At a moment when the fate of himself and his kingdom (as well as the peace of Hector's shade) hangs upon the goodwill and favour of Zeus, he can think of no higher title wherewith to propitiate him than the old

"Father Zeus, thou that rulest from Ida, most glorious, most great!" (*Iliad*, xxiv. 308).

As a mortal father in sore distress, he takes refuge with the immortal father of all. The prayer, moreover, would seem to be a very ancient formula, handed down from one generation to another, and current in Homer's time as a kind of "common prayer" among both European and Asiatic peoples of Aryan race. For, not only is it used by Agamemnon in his appeal to Zeus before the single combat between Menelaus and Paris, which is to decide the quarrel (*Iliad*, iii. 276), but it is also put into the mouth of the common folk: "And the people prayed and lifted up their hands to the gods. And on this wise would say many a one of Achæans and Trojans:—"Father Zeus, thou that rulest from Ida, most glorious, most great!" (*Iliad*, iii. 318).

Again, the myths represent men as the handiwork of Prometheus, whereas the Greek religious sense turns naturally to Zeus. Thus, Philæsius in the *Odyssey*, when reproaching Zeus with the woes and sufferings of mankind, bases his accusation on the fact that he hath begotten them (*Od.*, xx. 20 *et seq.*). He has given them life, therefore, so the argument runs, he ought to give them happiness.

As with the sovereignty of Nature, so does the idea that men are the children and handiwork of God, appear also in later times. Plato, as we know, held that God formed men out of the earth (*Pol.*, p. 271); Cleanthes says that "we are his offspring"; and Aratus calls God "Father of men—for," he adds, "we are his children."<sup>1</sup> These instances are drawn from later writers, but even for the earliest times the noble application by Epictetus of the belief in the fatherhood of God, holds good: "The man," says he, "who can honestly convince himself that God, preferring us men, has created us—that God is

<sup>1</sup> See also Acts xvii. 28 for St. Paul's reference to this passage.



the Father of men as well as of gods—that man, methinks, will conceive no unworthy, no ignoble thought of himself.”

*Zeus as the God of Social Life.*—It follows from the foregoing that Zeus must be, as ruler in Olympus, ruler also on earth, and in this capacity we find him again supreme and all-wise. “In the most forcible way,” says Welcker, “it is declared everywhere, both in Homer and Hesiod, that the son of Kronos is all-seeing, all-knowing, all-wise, all-powerful, just, and a Father of men. . . . From a hundred passages in each poet, certain names resound again and again, as if consecrated of set purpose—Zeus, the Far-seeing, the Wise, the Counsellor, High Counsellor, Ruler, Highest Ruler (Welcker, i. 175). His counsels are dark and hidden, inscrutable even to the gods (*Iliad*, i. 545–550). The highest aim of the heroic epic is to show how the promise and purpose of Zeus were fulfilled; for no word of his is revocable or false, or without fulfilment, when once he hath pledged it by the bowing of his head (*Iliad*, i. 526 *et seq.*). No one can resist his might; as old Nestor says to Diomedes when Zeus thunders and lightens against them: “A man may not at all fight against the will of Zeus, even though one be very strong, for he is stronger far” (*Iliad*, viii. 143). “He hath laid low the heads of many cities and will yet lay low, for greatest is his strength (*Iliad*, ii. 117; ix. 24), and he is disposer of war” (*Iliad*, xiv. 84).

He knoweth all things well—what is appointed to mortal men (*Od.*, xx. 75); two urns stand upon his threshold, the one filled with evil, the other with blessings, and he dispenses from both to men at his pleasure (*Iliad*, xxiv. 527 *et seq.*). He casteth down and he honoureth; he increaseth or diminisheth valour (*areté*) (*Iliad*, xx. 242); giveth the works of war to one, to another the dance, lute and song to a third; and in the heart of yet another hath far-seeing Zeus put excellent understanding (*Iliad*, xiii. 730 *et seq.*); as Agamemnon says to Achilles: “Though thou be very strong, yet this, I ween, God gave to thee” (*Iliad*, i. 178). “Olympian Zeus himself, dealeth out (*nemei*) happiness to the good and to the evil, to each one severally as he willeth; God will give this and withhold that, as he willeth in his mind, for he can do all” (*Od.*, xiv. 444).

Consistently with these representations, all power on earth flows from Zeus. From him kings derive their authority and their sceptre, the symbol of that authority. Of his kingly staff Achilles says: “The sons of the Achæans who exercise judgment, bear it in their hands, even those who watch over the judgments (*themistes*) for Zeus”—(or, as it may be rendered, “by Zeus’ command”) (*Iliad*, i. 237). Again, if Zeus is thus supreme in the state, if kings are but his fosterlings and deputies, deriving all authority from him, he is represented as no less supreme in watching over the manner in which authority of any kind is used; above all—he hates injustice. Storm and torrents rushing headlong from the hills are the punishments sent by Zeus in his wrath and anger against men who with violence judge crooked judgments (*skolias themistas*) in the assembly and drive justice out, little recking of the vengeance (*opis*) of the gods” (*Iliad*, xvi. 384 *et seq.*). Hence, Zeus is the god of the oath (*horkios*) at the basis of justice and morality; and his wrath, therefore, is no less manifest against false swearers, perjurers, and those who disregard the solemn pact and treaty. Thus Agamemnon says of the Trojans’ breach of truce: “Zeus, the son of Kronos, enthroned on high, that dwelleth in the heaven, himself shall shake his dark ægis over them, in wrath at this deceit” (*Iliad*, iv. 166 *et seq.*). And again, “Father Zeus will be no helper of liars” (*Iliad*, iv. 235). He punishes all crimes (*Od.*, i. 379; ii. 144).

In regard to the virtues of the private man also, Zeus is protector and guardian. He is the god of hospitality (*xenios*), that virtue wherein the

humanity of the age lay, and his anger in this capacity is specially to be feared. An evil return for hospitality received was the cause of the Trojan war, and Menelaus, therefore, beseeches Zeus to avenge him on Paris "so that many a one of men that are yet to come may shudder to wrong his host who hath shown him friendship" (*Iliad*, iii. 350 *et seq.*). Zeus is also the god of the poor (*Od.*, vi. 207); of suppliants (*Od.*, vi. 207)—he knoweth when his daughters, the Litæ (prayers) are disregarded (*Iliad*, ix. 502 *et seq.*); of fugitives, and of those fleeing from the avenger of blood (*Od.*, xvi. 421 *et seq.*). Finally, he is the god of family life, of the household (*herkeios*), for his altar stands in the court of every house (*Iliad*, xvi. 231; *Od.*, xxii. 334).

*Zeus supreme over Fate.*—No part probably of the primitive Greek religion has been so misunderstood as that which concerns Zeus, as highest god, in his relation to Fate or Destiny. The misconception, however, rests not with Homer, but with his interpreters. "Only through an imperfect acquaintance with Zeus and the gods as represented in Homer," says Welcker, "could the idea ever have arisen that over him and them there hung a blind, resistless Fate, without life or personality—a dark, incomprehensible Necessity."

That such a power existed was indeed the belief of later times, when the complications of civilisation had obscured primitive simplicity of thought and life. The Greeks did not hold the key to the apparently inscrutable problem presented by society—the vile on horseback, the worthy on foot—Dives in purple, Lazarus in rags. Life was not to them, as to us Christians, merely the school, the training place for a higher order of things—and baffled in their efforts to understand it, they took refuge in the idea of Fate, of a blind necessity thwarting the intentions even of a benevolent deity.

This belief, however, was not of the essence of the Greek religion in its beginnings; and Homer, on whom the whole superstructure is built up, gives (when rightly understood) no countenance to the idea. To represent Zeus, Highest Orderer, Wise Counsellor, Father of Gods and men, as perfectly helpless before a power greater than himself, would, indeed, have destroyed the very intention of the poet and of the epos. Zeus, in the *Iliad*, controls Fate.

To the *motif* of the *Iliad*—the inner secret spring, which hidden from sight, yet impels the whole—Homer gives the clue in his very first lines, his invocation to the Muse. "Sing, goddess," he says, of such and such things whereby "the counsel of Zeus wrought out its fulfilment" (*Iliad*, i. 1-5). The aim and object of the *Iliad*, therefore, is to show how was accomplished, not the blind decree of Destiny, but the "counsel of Zeus." To this we shall refer again.

*Moera, Aesa.*—By the side of Zeus again, in Homer, the *ordinary* fate of men appears as a shadowy personification called Moera or Aesa—names, both of which mean, as we have already seen, "part, lot, portion," with the collateral idea of *death*, especially, as the inevitable lot and portion of all. Hence "Death and Fate" generally appear together (*Iliad*, v. 83; xvi. 334, &c., &c.), whilst Fate is personified by the addition of an adjective, as *e.g.* Death and "resistless" Fate.

Another combination frequently found is "God and Fate." "Hence," says Welcker, "the Moera or Aesa is not independent; she does not stand alone, but proceeds from Zeus, and it is merely accidental that we do not find her called the *daughter* of Zeus." As it is, she is termed *Dios Aisa* = the decree of Zeus, and in this sense the phrase is used repeatedly.

Moera and the will of Zeus would, indeed, seem in Homer's esteem to be identical, for Patroclus exclaims in his death-agony: "Zeus and Apollo have subdued me;" and then immediately afterwards: "Ruinous Fate (Moera) and



Leto's son (Apollo) have slain me," thereby implying that Zeus and Fate are, in their working, not two powers, but one and the same (*Iliad*, xvi. 845, 846), (*Welcker*). Later ideas of the same nature as Moera and Aesa were *heimarmenē*, destiny, *peprōmenē*, fate, and *morsimon*, doom.

*The Web of Fate.*—Zeus and the gods are represented in Homer as themselves spinning the web of life or destiny of man (*epiklothein*, *Od.* iv. 207; iii. 208; viii. 579, &c.). What is, then, this web of fate or life? It is no fatalistic conception, but simply the *natural chain* of circumstances in the life of man (*Welcker*). Man, in fact, by his freedom of will and action spins his own fate, while the web so woven is, unconsciously to the individual, forming part of a great whole—the counsel of Zeus. In this sense the death of Patroclus is represented as the result of his own forgetfulness, and yet as in accordance with the mind of Zeus. "For if he had kept the word of Pelides" (*i.e.* to avoid Hector), "verily he would have escaped the evil fate (*kêra*) of black death. But," moralises the poet, "ever is the purpose (*noos*) of Zeus stronger than the purpose of men" (*Iliad*, xvi. 686). In other words, the purpose of Zeus is here represented as controlling both fate and the individual, although it is the fiery will and energy of the individual, Patroclus, that impel him onward to meet his doom.

*The Balance of Fate.*—But the reader will say, if Zeus was thus believed to control Fate, how is it that we find him represented as weighing the destinies of individuals and of armies in a balance, as though trying to ascertain thereby the will of some mysterious power "outside" of himself?

We read, *e.g.* that in the heat of an engagement, when the battle was at its fiercest, "the Father took his golden scales, and put in them two Fates (*kêre*) of low-laying death—one for the horse-taming Trojans, and one for the mail-clad Achæans—and holding the balance by the midst, he poised it, and the Achæans' day of destiny sank down. (Then did the fates of the Achæans sink upon the bountiful earth, but the fates of the Trojans were raised toward heaven.) And he thundered mightily from Ida, and sent his blazing lightning amid the host of the Achæans, and they saw and were amazed, and pale fear gat hold upon them all" (*Iliad*, viii. 69). So also, in the 22nd Book (209), the fates of Achilles and Hector are weighed.

The Balance would seem to be a naïve symbol of reflection, consideration, taking counsel with one's self, *weighing* the merits of both sides before coming to a decision. Jean Paul truly calls language a "dictionary of faded metaphors," and we are apt to forget that the "balance" of Zeus simply expresses in action an operation which we perform mentally every time that we *ponder* over anything about which it is necessary to come to a decision. We reflect on the respective merits of both sides of a case until one aspect *preponderates* over—*i.e.* outweighs—the other.<sup>2</sup> The weighing of the respective fates is, therefore, a symbol of the world-ruler taking counsel with himself, pondering carefully *both* sides of the matter at issue (*Welcker*).

"In the mythology of the *Iliad* we discover one important truth unconsciously involved, which was almost entirely lost from view amidst the nearly equal scepticism and credulity of subsequent ages. Zeus (or Jupiter) is popularly to be taken as *omnipotent*. No distinct empire is assigned to fate or fortune; *the will of the Father of gods and men is absolute and uncontrollable*. This seems to be the true character of the Homeric deity, and it is very necessary that the student of Greek literature should bear it in mind" (*H. N. Coleridge*).

<sup>1</sup> Jupiter is also represented by Virgil as weighing the fate of Turnus (*Aen.* xii. 725).

<sup>2</sup> From the Latin *pondero*, I weigh. See also Professor Max Müller on the French *penser*, *peser* (*Sci. of Lang.*, ii. 302, 377).

One limitation only to the power of Zeus do we find in the *Iliad*—he cannot undo the past. In a certain sense do not we Christians maintain the same of JEHOVAH? Human beings are free agents—free to stand and free to fall. If they fall, the eternal punishment of their fall may indeed be remitted, but the temporal consequences to themselves remain the same. Hence, the old knight, Nestor, is represented as saying in reply to Agamemnon's pitiful lament when the rampart has been forced: "Verily, these things are prepared and being accomplished—nor could high-thundering Zeus himself fashion them otherwise" (*Iliad*, xiv. 53). He means, although he is too politic to say it, "We are even now suffering the consequences of thy fault, O Agamemnon, and Zeus himself cannot undo that."

*The Character of Zeus.*—When we thus group together the scattered passages in which the Homeric idea of the supreme being is expressed, we are filled with amazement that the Hellenes should have come so near in many ways to the monotheistic conception of God. Here we find distinctly the attributes of sovereign power, wisdom, and justice concentrated in one being, represented as far above all others both in heaven and earth, father of immortals as of mortals, holding the fate of all in his hands, perfectly distinct from the other gods, approached by mortals in a different way. So grand is the picture that we are almost reluctant to inquire further whether there is anything to qualify it. Unfortunately there is—the Zeus of theory is not the Zeus of practice, and the practical qualifications meet us in the form of flat contradictions to the theoretic assumptions. Let us look at a few of these contradictions.

First, then, at the very opening of the *Iliad* (i. 696 *et seq.*) we hear of this possessor of unbounded sovereignty having on one occasion been deprived of his liberty and bound, not by rebellious Titans, but by his wife, daughter, and brother, and released from bonds, not by the exercise of his own inherent power, but in the most humiliating way, by the appearance of the hundred-handed giant Briareus, who is strong enough to frighten the rebels into submission.

We may say, and say rightly, that here we have a primitive myth in which war in heaven denotes the strife and conflict of the elements. To us the story is symbolical. There is no indication, however, that Homer took either this or any similar myth whose rudeness betrays its age—as, *e.g.* the punishment of Hera—in a symbolical sense.<sup>1</sup> On the contrary, this very story of the binding of Zeus is a leading *motif* in the plan of the *Iliad*, for it is the gratitude of Zeus to Thetis (who has sent Briareus to the rescue) that leads the Father of gods and men to grant her request, and show special honour to her son Achilles, by sending those reverses on the Achæans, which cause them to realise the want of the hero's arms and the fault of Agamemnon. The contrast, therefore, which strikes us between the theoretical all-power and the practical no-power of Zeus, does not appear to have occurred to the author of the *Iliad*, or, if it did, he seems to have regarded the motive of gratitude, shown by the world-ruler to an inferior, as outweighing all other considerations.

<sup>1</sup> Symbolical myths, which are evidently much older than the age of Homer, are (besides the chaining of Zeus and chastisement of Hera instanced above) the myth of Typhoeus (*Iliad*, ii. 781); the hiding of Hephestus underneath the sea (*Iliad*, xiii. 396); the chaining of Ares in a prison-house of bronze (*Iliad*, v. 385); the Battle of the Gods (= Theomachia) probably (*Iliad*, xxi. 385); the cattle of Helios (*Od.*, xii. 127). The symbolical meaning of these myths is quite forgotten. "There is not the smallest ground," says Nägelsbach, "for supposing that Homer introduced symbolical myths with a religious purpose." Such as, for instance, we find underlying the "Homeric Hymn to Demeter."



That passage in the *Iliad*, again, which suggested to Pheidias the ideal for his colossal bust of the Olympian Zeus—"Kronion spake and nodded his dark brow, and the ambrosial locks flowed from the king's immortal head, and he made great Olympus quake" (*Iliad*, i. 528 *et seq.*)—follows immediately on the speech in which the Cloud-gatherer, sore troubled, expresses his fear of Hera's taunts and reproaches in terms not a whit different from those that would be used by any goodman upon earth in mortal dread of a contentious spouse. To us, the World-ruler, afraid of his own wife, is not a very edifying spectacle; to Homer, apparently, there is nothing incongruous in it.

And if the omnipotence of Zeus is thus described, his omniscience is even weaker; for he can be deceived and is deceived both by Ate and by Hera. Of the latter it is said that Zeus "in no wise discerned her subtilty" (*Iliad*, xix. 95, 112).

As for justice, this being of whose visitations on the "crooked judgments" of men Homer speaks in language so grand, shows himself as no whit ashamed to employ underhand means for the furtherance of his purposes. He deceives Agamemnon by a dream—a baneful dream (*Iliad*, ii. 6). Worse still, this god who watches over the oath and its fulfilment, assents to the proposal of Hera, and himself gives the command that Athena shall incite the Trojans to do violence to the Achæans "despite the oaths" (*Iliad*, iv. 64 *et seq.*).

Again, if there be one characteristic of the supreme god more beautiful and more often emphasised by the poet than another, it is the care of Zeus for the suppliant, the poor, and the stranger. This again is flatly contradicted. Odysseus arrives amongst the Phæacians in all three characters—he is utterly destitute, forlorn, and unknown. They take him in, clothe him, entertain him, and when they have heard his story, send him back to his own country in peace and safety with royal gifts and honours to boot. One would think that here was conduct deserving of the highest commendation from Zeus Xenios, the god of the stranger. How does he requite it? He gratifies the wrath of Poseidon (who is enraged that Odysseus has escaped him) by allowing him to wreak his vengeance on the noble Phæacians, the givers of safe escort, instead, and himself suggests that in sight of all who are anxiously looking out for the return of the ship, Poseidon should change it into a stone and sink it—a suggestion which the sea-monarch, nothing loth, promptly carries out (*Od.*, xiii. 154 *et seq.*).

How, finally, about the fatherhood of Zeus? This in practice is weakest of all. The providence of Zeus is not for the race but for specially favoured individuals, and even towards these individuals it is not unmixed with caprice. On the one hand we have the beautiful phrases: "Then the Father had pity on him (Agamemnon) as he wept" (*Iliad*, viii. 245), and again, "My heart is woe for Hector" (*Iliad*, xxii. 169); we have also the no less beautiful idea that it is the Father alone of all the gods who has compassion on Achilles; when, in his grief for Patroclus, he will not break bread, it is the Father who bids Athena feed him with nectar and ambrosia (*Iliad*, xix. 342 *et seq.*); and again, it is far-seeing Zeus who watches old Priam setting forth on his dangerous journey, and sends Hermes the helper to lead him (*Iliad*, xxiv. 331 *et seq.*).

Such indications of trust in the great Father are as touching as they are beautiful; but, on the other hand, they are weakened by the evidence that Zeus cares little for men as a race. Thus, before the last engagement, the great battle which is to decide the fate of Troy, Zeus allows all the gods to take part in the *mêlée*, choosing sides as they will: "As for me," he says, "I will remain here, sitting within a fold of Olympus, and rejoice my heart by

gazing" (*Iliad*, xx. 22)—on the scene of carnage. Again, in the naïve description of the grief of Achilles' immortal horses at the death of Patroclus, it is said (*Iliad*, xvii. 441 *et seq.*) that "Kronion shook his head and spake to his own soul. Ah, unhappy ones! wherfore gave we you to King Peleus, a mortal man, you who are unaging and undying? Was it that ye should suffer woes with wretched men? For nothing, I ween, is more pitiable than man of all the things that breathe and creep upon the earth." Here Zeus evidently feels more for the horses than for wretched man. Again, Hector knows full well that the doom of Ilion is to be laid low; but his anguish at the thought of the fate of his wife—of the time when, as he predicts to Andromache, "one of the mail-clad Achæans shall lead thee, weeping far from the day of freedom" into hard bondage in a strange land—is lightened by no hint of any presentiment that the Father watches over the captive. No! death is the only consolation: "Me, in death, may heaped-up earth conceal" is his final conclusion, "before I hear thy cry and thy carrying into captivity!" (*Iliad*, vi. 454 *et seq.*).

The favour of the father of men and of gods moreover has its root in self-glory. Hector is dear to Zeus, not because he is noble and self-sacrificing, a hero amongst heroes, but because he had burnt for Zeus many thighs of oxen (*Iliad*, xxii. 170). The same idea finds expression in the so-called Homeric "Hymn to Demeter," when Zeus interposes to save the human race from starvation, not from any motive of pity, but from the fear that if men perish he will be deprived of his rightful sacrifices and honours.

If we go on to that other aspect of the character of Zeus, which in later and degenerate times affords scope to the fancies of such a writer as Ovid, we are not surprised that Homer, as a moral religious teacher, should have come under the lash of the philosophers.

The "many brides" of Zeus were not of Homer's making; how they came into being we have already explained (see *ante*, p. 220). The brides of Zeus are merely figures of the earth or of the sky. Homer is not to blame for the many consorts of the god of the heavens. The literal interpretation of these old myths is caused by their real meaning having been forgotten. This was, however, a forgetfulness fraught with serious consequences, as we shall presently see, for, despite the protests of philosophers, the masses of the people never rose above the literal interpretation of the myths.

Such are the varying and contradictory conceptions of the early Greeks concerning their supreme god. Reconciled they cannot be. How are they to be explained? Simply by bearing in mind that we are considering the results of a grand experiment extending over long centuries, the result of the *pselaphan*, the groping in the dark, its achievements and its failures.

The Zeus of Homer is a composite being, put together out of three distinct elements. The first is the development of that germ from which we started (p. 246)—the true religious germ, the belief in "a great Father, who loves justice and hates injustice." The second, the mythological element, springs from the confounding of the Dyaus-god in Heaven with *dyaus*, Heaven itself. The third, the human element, springs from the anthropomorphic form in which the two first elements are clothed.

To reconcile these three elements, the divine, the natural, and the human, is impossible, even to a Homer. Hence his Zeus stands out like the great image in the vision of Daniel,<sup>1</sup> or, not to leave Greek ground, like the statue of the God which Pausanias saw in the temple at Megara, the head whereof was of ivory and fine gold, the rest of the body of potter's clay (Paus., i. 40).

<sup>1</sup> Daniel ii. 31.



Morally, Zeus is far inferior to Hector, and we may be astounded that the Hectors of Greece should have continued to believe in and worship a being who is represented as acting in a way which would have been impossible to themselves.

The best solution of the problem is, that the Greeks (the thinkers among the early Greeks) distinguished (*krino*=I sift, I test) between Zeus as the moral ruler of the world and Zeus in his private capacity, much as some amongst ourselves draw the line between the Pope, speaking *ex cathedrâ*, and the Pope as fallible man. So, in the Homeric poems, "Zeus, allowing himself to be deceived by his cunning consort, is one conception; Zeus exercising the office of highest judge is another" (Schmidt, *Ethik*, i. 48).

We must never lose sight of the fact that Homer is not a religious teacher; that the Homeric poems were not "sacred books" to the Greeks, as the Vedas were to the Hindus. Homer exercised an influence almost unbounded over his countrymen, but it was an influence derived entirely from the intrinsic worth and power of his works, not from any sanctity attaching to them. The Zeus of Homer had a claim upon the Greeks in so far that he represented the highest power watching over the great natural laws, the observance of which formed the real heart-religion of antiquity.

This real religion sprang from a true germ and developed itself by a method based on a little word, which was as potent among the Greeks as the sister-word, *krino*=I sift, to which we have so often referred. This word was *theoreo*=I observe=I reflect=I draw conclusions; and the result of these conclusions is summed up in the first conception of Zeus which we examined. The Hellenes had been constructing their process of observation for centuries before the age of Homer. They had watched silently all that goes to the making of history, whether the history be that of an individual or of the group of individuals which we call a "family," or of the group of families which we call a "clan" or a "tribe." They had observed on a small scale sudden alternations of fortune, such as were later so amazingly observable on the grand scale of the Persian wars. They had seen for themselves that the race is not to the swift nor the battle to the strong; and out of observation after observation, experiment after experiment, they drew the conclusion that the affairs of men are in the hands of a great Power, invisible and beyond human ken, who guides and orders all as he wills. In a word, the Hellenes had discovered that there is a ruler of the universe.

Again, as they observed=reflected=theorised, they drew another conclusion. They noted that just as an individual or a family, or a clan, sowed, so did that individual or family or clan reap. They had found out that kindness shown to the weak, the fugitive, the suppliant, the slave, was richly rewarded; that injustice on the part of the stronger was also requited sooner or later, in some way wholly unaccountable on the grounds of ordinary reasoning.

In a word, the Hellenes had discovered that the Ruler of the Universe is a Power which makes for Righteousness; and to that Power they gave the highest and best name known to them, the name of Zeus.

The first conception, then, rests on a rock, the rock of observation and reflection—the real experience of life. It contains the kernel of the Greek religion, early and late—to every deep-thinking Greek, Zeus was not only a god amongst gods, but God of gods, as Plato calls him in the *Timæus*.

## II.—THE GODS OF OLYMPUS

We now turn for a few moments to consider the bright beings who form the court and the family of Zeus. "Mythological" creations as they are, they must by no means be passed over in a survey of the religious thought of Greece, for each one of them is worshipped—each one either represents some attitude of the supreme being, as Athena = Wisdom, and Apollo = Light; or personifies some quality or state worthy to be honoured, as Demeter = Motherhood, Hera = Matrimony, Hephæstus = the skill of the craftsman; or is, at the least, a power to be propitiated, as Poseidon, the earth-shaker, ruler of the waves, or Ares, god of war.

The distinction drawn later between the twelve Great Gods and the other deities does not exist in Homer; indeed, Hestia, the sacred fire on the hearth, the youngest of these "Great Gods," is not yet recognised as a deity. Moreover, the twelve Gods do not include among their number those who, in later times, exercised the highest influence on the religious thought of Greece—the so-called "chthonian" deities—Persephone, Hades, Dionysus—who form, together with Demeter, the power of the world beyond the grave. This circle of divine beings, although known to Homer, does not take any part in the action of the *Iliad*; in the *Odyssey*, on the other hand, the Lower World has already acquired much greater significance, as we shall shortly see.

In the *Iliad*, then, it is the bright gods of the heavens with whom we have mostly to do.

And let us note that, in all that brilliant assembly, there is not one vague or uncertain figure—each stands out before us as clearly cut, as firmly defined, as the shapes of the mountains around, for each form has passed under the chisel of the master. That this is the secret of the clearness of the divine figures in Homer is evident from the fact that the gods who are not, as it were, "formed" by him (as, e.g. Dionysus and Asclepius) are vague and varying personalities, wanting in that masterly "grasp" which stamps all the Homeric characters. In this sense we may accept the statement of Herodotus (ii. 53) that Homer and Hesiod framed the Greek theogony. Homer seized the misty images already in existence, and compressed them into definite shape in the mould of his own vigorous imagination. Hesiod, a century or so later, marshalled all the superhuman beings known to him into orderly genealogical sequence. What, then, was the Homeric conception, in general, of the gods?

(1) Simply this, in the first place, that they were beings on a gigantic scale. When Ares falls he covers 7 roods of ground (*Iliad*, xxi. 407); when he, or the earth-shaker Poseidon, shouts the sound is as the cry of 9000 or 10,000 men in battle (*Iliad*, v. 859; xiv. 148); when Athena (æther!) mounts the chariot with noble Diomedes, loud creaks the oaken axle beneath the weight of the dread goddess and the man of valour (*Iliad*, x. 837 *et seq.*); when Poseidon would go from the peak of Samothrace to his palace beneath the sea at Ægæ, he accomplishes the journey in four steps (*Iliad*, xiii. 20); under the feet of Hera and the god of Sleep, the topmost forest shakes (as though moved by an earthquake (*Iliad*, xiv. 285)).

The gods, moreover, need rest and support for these mighty bodies, just as much as do the puny folk of earth. Sleep is said to be "the lord of all gods as of all men" (*Iliad*, xiv. 233); Zeus himself sleeps (*Iliad*, i. 609; xiv. 352). Hermes eats and drinks. Certainly his food is Ambrosia and his drink ruddy nectar; nevertheless, it is not until he has "satisfied his soul with food," that he delivers to Calypso the message wherewith he is charged (*Od.*, v. 92 *et seq.*).



Further, the gods need shelter, houses to dwell in. We read that when the light of the sun had set, the banquet on Olympus came to an end, and each of the immortals departed to lie down in his own house, the palace made for him with understanding heart by Hephæstus, the glorious lame god (*Iliad*, i. 605 *et seq.*).

And not only are the gods burthened with bodies, but they suffer in these bodies. They can be wounded and sore hurt. Hera and awful Hades himself, lord of Death, are smitten by the swift arrows of Heracles; the pain Hera endures is terrible, "not to be healed," "pierced through with anguish" (*Iliad*, v. 392 *et seq.*). Hephæstus is not only lame, but deformed; his legs are weak and thin (*Iliad*, xviii. 394 *et seq.*; xx. 36 *et seq.*). Ares, the war-god, is shut up in a strong prison-house, and kept there for thirteen months by the Aloadaæ, mortal men (*Iliad*, v. 385 *et seq.*), and both he and Aphrodite are wounded in battle by another mortal, Diomedes, with the help of Athena (*Iliad*, v. 334 *et seq.*; 855 *et seq.*). Dionysus, finally, even in Homer, is persecuted (*Iliad*, vi. 130 *et seq.*); in later ages he is torn in pieces.

We shall, however, greatly err if we think of these beings—eating, drinking, and sleeping—as merely glorified men and women. Aith they are certainly; but they are more. When Diomedes, encouraged by his victory over the queen of Beauty, proceeds to attack Æneas, and leaps upon him a third and yet a fourth time, well knowing all the while that the arms of Apollo are shielding the Trojan hero, and not reverencing the great god, the Far-darter with a terrible cry gives the warning: "Think, Tydeides, and draw back, nor presume to match thyself with gods, for there is no comparison of the race of immortal gods and of men that walk upon the earth. Thus he spake, and Tydeides shrank backwards a little to escape the wrath of Apollo, the Far-darter" (*Iliad*, v. 440 *et seq.*). And Homer has highly represented as shrinking back from the god in awe even a hero like Diomedes, who has shortly before said of himself, and said truly: "'Tis not in my blood to shun the fight nor to cower down!" (*Iliad*, v. 252). Not in the earliest stages of thought even would a Greek have consented to worship a being whom he conceived as being on a level with himself.

In what, then, does the superiority of the gods consist?

(1) In this, primarily, that they are immortal. The title of "the immortal gods" runs continually through both the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. The gods are a race never-dying, always young, strong, vigorous, and beautiful—in contrast to the generations of men, who pass like the generations of the leaves: "The leaves that be, the wind scattereth on the ground; others, the budding forest putteth forth when the season of spring cometh on. So of the generations of men—one groweth up, another vanisheth" (*Iliad*, vi. 146 *et seq.*). The Greek, therefore, saw one grand point of distinction between himself and his gods in this, that, when he had passed into the land of forgetfulness, they would still live on in the strength of youth and beauty. "Where the Hellene found a limit set to himself," says Nägelsbach, "there, precisely, he fixed the divine for his gods" (*Hom. Theol.*). They were gods, in the first place, then, because Death had no power over them.

The reason of their immortality is naïvely set forth in the account of the wounding of Aphrodite by Diomedes: "Then flowed the immortal blood of the goddess, ichor, such as floweth in the blessed gods; for they eat no bread, neither drink they sparkling wine, wherefore they are bloodless, and are called immortals" (*Iliad*, v. 339 *et seq.*).

(2) The gods, again, as we have already seen, flow forth from the supreme being; they are the children or relatives of Father Zeus. All their power is

derived from him ; but in so far as they do not transgress his commands, they are free to exercise that power as they will, for weal or woe. Hence it behoves a mortal to be cautious in his behaviour towards them. Possessing this power, they can, theoretically, and often practically, do all things. Aphrodite carries Paris, and Apollo carries Hector out of the thick of the fight, when their lives are endangered, and in both cases the feat is performed, so the refrain runs, "very easily, as a god may."

(3) Moreover, the gods are associated with Zeus in conferring benefits on men : "Not to be cast away," says Paris in reference to his own beauty, "are the glorious gifts of the gods, which they themselves give, for of free will can no man obtain them" (*Iliad*, iii. 65).

Thus the gods, in the conception of the Homeric man, are worthy of reverence in at least six respects : they are undying, ever youthful and beautiful ; they carry out the decrees of Father Zeus ; they themselves can bestow gifts on man ; they are staunch helpers of those whom they favour ; they are stronger far than men (*Iliad*, x. 557) ; in their hands, on high, are held the issues of victory (*Iliad*, vii. 101), subject, of course, to that highest will of Zeus to which all, gods and men alike, are bound to submit (see *ante*, p. 249).

Superhuman though these gods are, however, they are very far from being "divine" in our sense of the word. As in the case of Zeus, here also we meet with the flattest contradictions. Theoretically, the gods "know all things" (*Od.*, 379, 468) ; practically, their knowledge is limited : Ares is not at all aware that his son has fallen in battle ; even Helios Hyperion, the sun-god, who walketh on high and beholdeth all things, does not know that his cattle have been slaughtered by the comrades of Odysseus, until Lampetie brings him word (*Iliad*, xiii. 521 ; *Od.*, xii. ; *Od.*, 374 *et seq.*).

Theoretically again, as the good swineherd Eumæus says, "the blessed gods love not cruel deeds, but justice they honour and the rightful acts of men" (*Od.*, xiv. 83). Practically, how do they show this ?

Poseidon pursues Odysseus with fury not only relentless, but vindictive, because his son, the Cyclops, has been blinded in self-defence by the hero. When Odysseus journeys to the lower world to inquire of Teiresias how he may return home, the seer tells him that the god will make it hard for him. "For, I ween, thou shalt not pass unmarked by the Earthshaker ; who hath laid up in his heart ill-will against thee, for rage that thou hast blinded his dear son" (*Od.*, xii. 100 *et seq.*). And, as we have seen, when Odysseus finally escapes, Poseidon vents his spite on the innocent Phæacians (*ante*, p. 251). Again, Ceneus, the Kalydonian king, neglects to offer the first-fruits of his garden-land to Artemis of the golden throne, and the archer-goddess promptly sends on the said garden-land a wild boar, fierce, white-tusked, who brings many heroes to the grievous pyre (*Iliad*, ix. 533 *et seq.*). Again, the wrath of Hera against the Trojans is supposed to be explained by the sin of Paris, who prefers in the famous judgment to herself and Athena (representatives of love and wisdom respectively), Aphrodite, "who brought to him deadly lust"<sup>1</sup> (*Iliad*, xxiv. 28 *et seq.*). So far, the anger is righteous. Nevertheless, we have the revengeful spirit of the despised beauty in the hatred with which she pursues the whole Trojan race. As Zeus says to her : "If thou wert to enter within the gates and long walls (of Troy), and devour Priam raw, and Priam's children, and the other Trojans, then mightest thou appease thine anger" (*Iliad*, iv. 34 *et seq.*). And Hera keeps up her rancour to the bitter end. In

<sup>1</sup> The passage (*Iliad*, xxiv. 28-30) is supposed to be a later interpolation ; but the idea lies at the root of Hera's conduct. Her anger (and that of Athena) is explainable on no other grounds.



the twentieth book she says: "For surely by many oaths among all the immortals have we two sworn, even Pallas Athena and I, never to turn from the Trojans the evil day, not even when all Troy shall burn with burning of raging fire" (*Iliad*, xx. 313). To her own children, moreover, Hera is not over-affectionate—when she discovers that the little new-born Hephæstus is lame, she simply throws him out of Olympus.

A worse feature even than cruelty, however, is that the gods themselves tempt men and teach them wickedness. Both in *Iliad* and *Odyssey* the whole blame of Helen's fault is laid on Aphrodite. It is she who leads Helen to desert her home with Paris, and who forces her by threats to remain in Troy (*Iliad*, iii. 164, 413; *Od.*, iv. 261).

Again, "noble" Autolycus, the grandfather of Odysseus, is said to have "surpassed all men in thieving and swearing," and it is the god Hermes himself who has taught him these admirable accomplishments (*Od.*, xix. 395).

As for bright-eyed Athena, emblem of Wisdom—who has not felt a thrill of indignation when she lures the noble Hector to his doom in the basest way—assuming the form of his best-loved brother Deiphobus, to draw him within the grasp of Achilles? (*Iliad*, xxii. 226). It is Athena moreover, who, in the earlier part of the story, tempts the Trojan Pandarus to break the league with the Achæans, despite the oaths and the covenants.

Even Apollo, god of Light, who most of all comes out of the inquiry with pure hands, is not free from the taint of treachery; for it is he who in the fight steals behind Patroclus, hidden in thick mist, deals from behind the blow that dazes him, strikes off his helmet, shatters his spear, throws down his shield, and leaves him unarmed, defenceless, an easy prey to Hector and the Trojans (*Iliad*, xvi. 788 *et seq.*).

Thus we see the gods of Olympus laden not only with human weakness but with human sin—lust, cruelty, revenge, hatred, treachery.

How comes it that Homer, whose mortal heroes hate and abhor a lie and the breaking of the oath, can yet attribute deceit to his gods—and that without so much as a hint of his being aware that anything was amiss? One explanation, of course, is that the poet was hampered by the traditions. Certainly, many of these instances of wrong on the part of the gods are evidently reminiscences of the doings of these deities in the exercise of their functions as simple nature-powers, before they had put on the anthropomorphic garb. Thus, it is quite natural that Poseidon, as the stormy treacherous sea—or Hera, as the gusty atmosphere, driven by opposing wind-currents—should visit anger on the innocent and on the guilty alike. That Hephæstus, as the flickering fire, should be lame and require crutch-fuel to support his steps, is quite natural; that, as the lightning, he should be thrown by his mother, the atmosphere, out of heaven, is also a matter of course—to us. That Apollo again, as the sun about to sink into the west, should smite his enemy from behind, is easily understood.<sup>1</sup> Further, that Hermes, the Wind, the greatest thief on earth—whirling away blossoms, fruit, whatsoever he will before our very eyes—that he should be said to teach thievery and the swearing of oaths empty as air, all this is perfectly comprehensive to us who possess the key to the myths.

The astounding thing, however, is that these myths were certainly not understood in any symbolical sense by Homer. And even if they had been so understood by him, they do not reach far enough. The deceit of Athena, for instance, cannot be traced back to any "nature" source. Whether she

<sup>1</sup> It is "when the sun turned to the time of the unloosing of oxen" (*Boulutonde*) that Patroclus receives his death-blow.

represent dawn or æther, both in their essence are light-giving powers—neither will lend itself to explain a lie.

We are thus driven to the supposition that in the estimation of Homer, the divine beings were free from the moral obligations binding upon men. They watched, indeed, that mortals should not overstep the bounds; but themselves existed under different conditions. This conclusion, disappointing as it is, only proves that no genius, however stupendous, can altogether escape the influences of his age. "First the natural, then the spiritual." The time had not yet arrived when a Pindar could maintain that right was right in gods as in men.

As to the rest, the early Greeks seem to have been able, as in the case of Zeus, to draw a line between the gods in their official and in their private capacity.

The failings of his deities do not appear to trouble Homer. Apollo may be capable of dealing a dastardly blow, but he is, all the same, the dread god of the silver bow, the god who descends from Olympus, wrath at heart, like to night, to punish the presumption of Agamemnon (*Iliad*, i. 44 *et seq.*). Athena, too, may be capable of inciting the Trojans to break the oaths and the covenants; nevertheless, she is still bright-eyed Athena, the unwearied maiden, great and glorious, going up and down the ranks of the Achæans with the golden-tasselled ægis, infusing courage, cheeriness, strength for the battle, into all hearts. She is still terrible as Obrimopatre, daughter of an awful sire, arming herself for the battle in the tunic and ægis of Zeus the cloud-gatherer, going forth with mighty helmet and ponderous lance, as representative of war in a righteous cause, to chastise murderous Ares, the renegade; war pursued out of sheer recklessness and love of slaughter (*Iliad*, ii. 446; v. 733 *et seq.*).

And so with the other gods. Each, as stated at the outset, has some characteristic which makes him in Greek eyes worthy to be revered, or, at the best, to be feared. The only god whom Homer cannot away with is Ares. Leaning, with fickle mind, now to one side, now to the other, caring not about the right of the case so long as he can glut his thirst for blood, Ares is at heart an arrant coward, empty as the blustering northern winds of Thrace which he represents. Homer knew nothing about the winds; but he revels in the punishments inflicted on their embodiment both when he is wounded by Athena and Diomedes, and also when Athena aims a mighty stone at him and he lies sprawling in the dust. On the former occasion, the touch of pain is too much for the doughty hero. He skulks out of the battle, and departs on a cloud to Olympus to complain to Father Zeus. "But the cloud-gatherer looked sternly at him and said: 'Sit not by me, thou turncoat, and whine. Most hateful to me art thou of all gods in Olympus, for ever thou lovest strife and wars and fightings'" (*Iliad*, v. 855; xxi. 403 *et seq.*). In this rebuke to carnage and slaughter—to war-for-its-own-sake—administered by Father Zeus, the poet heartily concurs, and over it he laughs, as he does over another rebuke given smilingly to Aphrodite, by the father of gods and men, when the beauty comes out of her own sphere, and attempts deeds of war (*Iliad*, v. 428).

## REVELATION

*The Gods and Men: how the gods reveal themselves.*—"All men yearn for the gods," says Homer in the *Odyssey* (*Od.*, iii. 347); or, as the verse might also be rendered, "All men have need of the gods." In the troubles and perplexities of life, men naturally turn to the Great Father for help and



guidance, and in Homer that help is thought of as not very far off. Everywhere the sense of the nearness of the divine is very apparent. The gods are believed to be ever at hand, ready to assist in time of need; not, indeed, to assist every one, but their chosen few. In bygone ages they were supposed, as we have seen, to mingle with the children of men; but that time is long past, and now their manifestations are confined to individuals.

In the *Iliad*, the most general helpers are Athena and Apollo, and as such these two divinities are often associated and invoked with Zeus. Thus, a common exclamation is: "Would to Father Zeus, and Athena, and Apollo!" Especially is it Athena, the unwearied maiden, the bright-eyed, who appears to the help of her favourites—Achilles, Diomedes, Menelaus, Odysseus, are all by turns the objects of her care. The Lord of the Silver Bow, Apollo, is frequently mentioned; but he too, on his part, rescues the Trojan heroes, Æneas and Hector. Hera, Ares, Aphrodite, and Poseidon also make their appearance among the combatants.

Sometimes the helper comes invisibly, concealed in a cloud; sometimes metamorphosed, in human shape, or otherwise. In the *Iliad*, Athena takes the form of Phoenix, the old tutor of Achilles; of a falling star; when about to deceive the Trojans, of a Trojan warrior in the *Odyssey* of Mentès; in the *Iliad*, again, she and Apollo sit on an oak as birds of prey<sup>1</sup> (*Iliad*, xvii. 555; iv. 75, 86; vii. 58; *Od.*, i. 105). Apollo, again, appears as a falcon; Hera takes the semblance of Stentor of stentorian voice; Ares, naturally, that of a Thracian captain (*Iliad*, xv. 237; v. 784, 462). Poseidon issues from the sea as Calchas the Seer,<sup>2</sup> and departs as a falcon; Iris, the messenger, makes her voice like to that of the Trojan sentinel; Hermes takes the form of a young man, a prince, in the comeliest of his prime (*Iliad*, xiii. 45, 62; ii. 791, 795; xxiv. 347). Thus the Greek might, at any moment, be face to face with the divine.

Always, however, this presence is recognised by its effects—"the gods are easy to be known" (*Iliad*, xiii. 72) from the spirit which they infuse into the heart. Thus a "great might" is breathed by Zeus and Apollo into the all-but-dead Hector; a threefold courage, inspired by Athena, seizes the soul of the already courageous Diomedes (*Iliad*, xv. 262; v. 136). The two Aiantes know well that the Calchas who addresses them is no Calchas; a god is he, from the great longing for battle which has seized their hearts, and urges them on to face even the ceaseless rage of Hector; their very feet beneath and hands above quiver with eagerness for the fight (*Iliad*, xiii. 68 *et seq.*).

In the (later) *Odyssey* these manifestations are much less frequent, and confined to Odysseus and his wife and son. Odysseus, however, as the true Hellenic hero—the man of resolute soul and unbounded resource—is left to fight his fight alone. Athena does not appear to him visibly until he has reached his native land, and he then makes it a cause of complaint to the bright-eyed goddess that although she has been kindly to him of old, yet that after the Achæians had left Troy and been scattered by Zeus, he had never seen her coming on board his ships or warding off sorrow from him (*Od.*, xvii. 485).

In the *Odyssey*, nevertheless, the belief in the bodily presence of the gods is still alive. When Antinous, the most arrogant of the suitors of Penelope, strikes the supposed beggar (Odysseus), the others warn him that it is not well to smite a wretched wanderer, "for the gods, like strangers from afar,

<sup>1</sup> For these bird-metamorphoses see *ante*, p. 234.

<sup>2</sup> The power of prediction was always associated with the divinities of the sea, the reason, probably, why Poseidon appears as the Seer.

put on all manner of shapes, and wander through the cities, observing the violence (*hybris*) and righteousness (*eunomia* = good order) of men" (*Od.*, xvii. 485).

*How the will of Zeus was made known.*—It is not, however, to the gods collectively that the Homeric man turns in his hour of direst need and perplexity. It is to that great power above the gods—the father of gods and of men that he looks, the counsellor, highest orderer, whose wit (*noos*) is even stronger than the wit of men (*Iliad*, xvii. 339; xvi. 688)—Zeus, as omniscient, is the giver of the signs and tokens which can guide men in perplexity. This is implied in his name, Panomphaios = giver of all oracles. Apollo, at a later period, is specially the god of oracles, but he is said to derive his knowledge of the future from Zeus (*Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, 532).

**Omens and Portents.**—The signs by which the will of Zeus is made known to men are at first signs from without. Some striking natural phenomenon—such as thunder, lightning, a rainbow, the swoop of the eagle; or some remarkable and significant circumstance, some prodigy—appearing at a critical moment, and especially in answer to prayer, were held to be indications of the will of the Most High. We have seen already how Zeus was believed to take an interest in, and to be ever intently watching the affairs of men; the idea, therefore, that the father would not leave his perplexed children in the dark as to the right course, the one he would have them pursue, is the natural outcome of this belief. The *sema* or the *teras* then, in the childlike faith of primitive man, was the divine revelation; coming in his hour of need it was a "messenger" from heaven.

I. OMENS FROM WITHOUT—(1) *The Flight of Birds.*—The first "sign" recognised by primitive man was probably the flight of birds, especially of birds of prey, and above all of the eagle—the symbol, as we have already seen, of Father Zeus. Soaring with his majestic pinions to the very æther of Zeus, the eagle was well calculated to arrest attention as a possible "messenger" (*angelos*) between heaven and earth. The flight of these birds, then (the *oionoi*), was considered full of meaning. If they appeared on the right, they boded good fortune; if on the left, the reverse. The signification of "right" and "left" in the beginning had probably nothing to do with the points of the compass; the "right" betokening the sphere of the dexterous and nimble right hand, the "left" that of the bungling, clumsy left hand.<sup>1</sup> Auguries from the flight of birds must have been taken in the Old Home, for we find the practice in India and Rome as well as in Greece (Schrader and Jevons, p. 255).

In Homer they are of frequent occurrence. One instance must suffice: Priam, the old king of Ilion, has been directed by Zeus through Iris to go to the Achaian ships and ransom the body of Hector. Hecabē, his consort, is in despair; she cannot believe that he has really had an intimation of the will of Zeus. Finding him, however, bent upon the journey, she brings him, when his preparations are completed, honey-sweet wine in a golden cup, and bids him make libation to Father Zeus, and pray that he may have a safe return. Then she tells him to ask for a sign from cloud-enwrought Zeus (*Iliad*, xxiv. 283 *et seq.*), "an omen, a swift messenger, dearest of birds to himself, of mightiest strength, to appear on the right, that thou mayest see him with thine eyes, and mayest go in trust thereof to the ships of the fleet-horsed Danaans. But," she adds, "if far-seeing Zeus will not grant thee his messenger, then I shall

<sup>1</sup> "It was only when the interpretation of bird-portents had become a special science in Greece and Rome that it became necessary to transfer 'the right' and 'the left' to the quarters of the sky" (Schrader, *op. cit.*, p. 256).



not urge thee to go to the ships of the Achaians, howso'er thou mayest yearn for it."

Old Priam does as she suggests, for good it is to lift the hands to Zeus, if perchance he will have pity; and having washed his hands with pure water and made libation of wine, as he stands in his courtyard ready to start, he looks up to heaven, and prays that beautiful prayer: "Father Zeus, that rulest from Ida, most glorious, most great, grant me to find welcome and pity from Achilles." Then he asks for a bird of omen; Zeus the counsellor hearkens; straightway a magnificent eagle, dusky, wide-winged, appears upon the right hand above the city. "And when they saw it they rejoiced, and their hearts were glad within their breasts."

(2) *Thunder*.—This sign in the *Iliad* occurs most frequently of all, and is regarded by both contending parties as a sure token either of the favour or of the wrath of Zeus. Thus in the eighth book (133 *et seq.*), when Zeus thunders terribly, and Nestor drops the reins from his old hands in fear, and beseeches Diomedes to leave the field, "For knowest thou not," says he, "that victory from Zeus attendeth not on thee?" Diomedes debates in his own mind whether he shall withdraw or remain and face Hector. Thrice he doubted in his mind, and thrice Zeus, Lord of Counsel, thundered from Ida, a sign to the Trojans of the turning of victory. Again, in Book XV., when the Greeks are on the brink of despair, a loud peal of thunder comes in response to the prayer of Nestor for help (*Iliad*, xv. 377); the Trojans, however, think that the sign is meant for them, and press on the more eagerly.

(3) *Phenomena of light* are more especially signs from Zeus, whether the lightning itself, which Kronion graspeth in his hand and brandisheth from radiant Olympus, showing an omen (*sema*) to mortals; or the star which he sends as a sign (*teras*) to mariners or to a wide host of folk, bright-shining; or the gleaming rainbow which he stretches in the heavens as a portent (*teras*) of war or chill storm (*Iliad*, xiii. 242; iv. 75; xvii. 547).

(4) *A Prodigy*.—Some remarkable circumstance which happens at a moment of unwonted expectation or excitement. Thus, to the Achaians, as they are sacrificing at Aulis, appears a serpent which climbs a plane-tree whereon were a mother-sparrow and her eight little ones; these he devours, and is himself turned to stone—an occurrence interpreted by Calchas the Seer as betokening that the war should last nine years, and the city be taken in the tenth (*Iliad*, ii. 308 *et seq.*).

Sometimes the omen is propitious, as when the eagle appears at the prayer of Agamemnon, bearing in his talons a fawn, which he drops by the altar of Zeus Panomphaios. "And when the Achaians saw that the bird was from Zeus, they sprang the more upon the Trojans, and bethought them of the joy of battle" (*Iliad*, viii. 250). At other times it is adverse. Thus, when the Trojans are on the point of storming the Greek wall, an eagle is seen on the left hand of the host, and lets fall a terrible blood-red snake. "And the Trojans shuddered when they saw the glittering snake lying in their midst, portent of ægis-bearing Zeus" (*Iliad*, xii. 200 *et seq.*).

(5) *Blood-rain*.—We read that Kronides rained from the upper air "dew-drops dank with blood" because he was going to send down many strong men to Hades (*Iliad*, xi. 53). This phenomenon is sent also in honour of his son Sarpedon, the Lycian prince, as an omen of his death (*Iliad*, xvi. 459).

II. OMENS FROM WITHIN.—It is quite evident, however, that all the outward signs mentioned—birds, thunder, lightning, prodigies—are capable of a double interpretation. It was not easy to tell whether the omen was propitious or the reverse, neither was it certain for whom precisely it was intended (see

*ante*, p. 261). And therefore the Homeric man was forced to bethink him of other ways whereby he might ascertain more definitely the will of the heavenly powers. Hence we find him relying also on another class of signs, omens from within—either vouchsafed personally to an individual by a dream or presentiment, or reaching him in some way through his fellow-men.

(1) *Dreams*.—Possibly from first to last dreams were regarded as tokens coming directly from God, a supposition by no means confined to the Greeks, and not extinct at the present day. When the Achæans are in perplexity as to the cause of the pestilence which is ravaging the army, Achilles suggests that they should inquire of a seer, or a priest, yea, or of an interpreter of dreams, "for," he says, "a dream, too, is of Zeus" (*Iliad*, i. 63).

The reason of the belief is not far to seek. In early days dreams must have appeared to man to be as independent of his own mental and bodily organisation as they are of his will or the will of others. Moreover, they come to the individual, not to the crowd, and must be, as a consequence, a token meant for his own guidance. Hence, when Zeus casts about in his mind as to how Agamemnon may be induced to attack the Trojans, we are told that this seemed to him the best, to send to him a baneful (that is, a deceitful) dream (*Iliad*, ii. 5); this plan he accordingly puts into execution. Agamemnon doubts not for a moment. On the strength of the dream's assurance that Zeus, "though he be afar, yet hath great care and pity" for him, he at once summons the flowing-haired Achæans, and resumes the fight. Let us note that the "voice" of the dream, which still rings in the ears of the king when he awakes, is called the divine "Omphē." This *omphē* is used as synonymous with "oracle"; as such it appears in Pan-omph-aïos = giver of all oracles, the epithet of Zeus to which we have already referred.

In the *Odyssey*, a phantom is sent in a dream by Athena to comfort Penelope, when Telemachus goes in quest of his father, and the slaying of the Wooers is also revealed to her in a dream (*Od.*, iv. 795; xix. 535). Penelope, therefore, knows much about dreams; she has studied the matter in her wise heart. She knows that the shadowy dreams which issue from the ivory gate (of their habitation) are deceitful, and that those which come through the gate of homely horn are true. But who may know through which gate they pass? Penelope has come to the conclusion that "Dreams, verily, are inexplicable, and hard to interpret; neither are all fulfilled to men" (*Od.*, xix. 560). Dreams, therefore, although some are fulfilled, are in themselves a source of perplexity.

(2) *Ossa* = Rumour; *phēmē* = an utterance. Another token, taken as coming from on high, is Rumour. When Agamemnon, in obedience to the dream sent from Zeus, proposes to make trial of the willingness of the people, we read that the folk hastened eagerly, like thronging bees, to the place of assembly, for "Ossa (Rumour), the messenger of Zeus, blazed forth in their midst, urging them to go" (*Iliad*, ii. 93). The notion that a return home was in project, had seized them, and, as we should put it, the report spread like wild-fire. This was the work of Ossa.

After Odysseus has slain the suitors, again, Rumour the Messenger goes swiftly through the city, telling of their dismal fate (*Od.*, xxiv. 213).

*Phēmē* is a word uttered by a stranger at a significant time, a word spoken to suit the speaker's own needs without thought of any one else, but conveying a special and distinct meaning to the person for whom it is divinely intended. Thus, on the morning of the day of vengeance, Odysseus in his great need asks of Father Zeus a double sign, an omen (*teras*) from without and some good word of omen (*phēmē*) from within (*Od.*, xx. 98 *et seq.*). His prayer is answered by thunder from a cloudless sky, the omen from without, and immediately



also the *phēmē*, omen from within, falls upon his ear in the words of a woman who is grinding at the mill, and who thinking only of her own trouble, also prays: "Father Zeus, who rulest over gods and men, of a surety thou hast thundered loudly from the starry sky where yet there is no cloud, and showest to some one thereby a sign (*teras*): now fulfil to me, miserable, this word which I speak: May the Wooers on this day, for the last and latest time, make their sweet feast in the halls of Odysseus! those who have loosened my knees by heart-vexing toil, to grind their barley-meal, may they now sup for the last time!"

Thus, in these words, spoken with no conscious reference to himself, but answering his thoughts, Odysseus has his second sign, "a good omen within," and he was glad, for he thought to punish the evil-doers.

The belief in the *phēmē*, either as the significant word, or as a rumour spreading unaccountably, existed also in historic times.

(3) *Presentiments*.—The Greeks believed also—and this belief, like that in dreams, is by no means confined to them nor to the Homeric age—that the future was revealed to the dying. Thus Patroclus, in his last agony, foretells the fate of Hector, that he is to be subdued by Achilles; Hector, in his turn, predicts that of Achilles, that he shall be slain by Paris and Phœbus Apollo at the Skæan Gate (*Iliad*, xvi. 854; xxii. 359).

III. THE SEER.—Next, after Dreams, the Voice, Presentiments, had all proved inadequate to meet the urgent necessities of life, we arrive at that embodiment of divine knowledge, the SEER, who for centuries held so prominent a place in Greek esteem. To this he was doubly entitled, for the true Seer was not only the *oionopolos* = interpreter of bird-auguries, or the *theopropos* = the interpreter of the divine will, but also the *Mantis* = the man inspired by the god,<sup>1</sup> able to foretell the future at all times, and not merely, like an ordinary mortal, at the hour of death.

The most famous Greek seers are the Theban Teiresias, already mentioned (p. 145), and Calchas, the seer who accompanies the Achæans to Troy. Of the latter it is said, that he was "of augurs far the best; he knew the things that are, and that are to be, and that had been aforetime; he guided the ships of the Achæans to Ilion by his soothsaying which Phœbus Apollo bestowed on him (*Iliad*, i. 69).<sup>2</sup> Thus, even in Homer's time, the gift of prediction is connected specially with Apollo. A famous seer on the Trojan side is the prince Helenus, Priam's dear son, a brother of Hector. Other notable seers are Amphiaraus, Melampus, and Theoclymenus.

That there were in early days high-minded men, true "enthusiasts," really "full of the god" in the sense that they believed in themselves and their mission—possessed also of the clear sight which is always linked to disinterestedness—and able thus to speak the word of warning, to guide and direct their fellows—there is no reason whatever to doubt. Even in the age of Homer, however, there is evidence that belief in the seer was on the wane. The office has been degraded, unconsciously no doubt, but surely, by the numbers who have, fit or unfit, pressed into it. In the *Odyssey*, the *mantis* is classed with the physician, the carpenter, and the minstrel, the workers for the people (*Od.*, xvii. 383), a fact which proves, not that the demiourgos is aught

<sup>1</sup> "Mantis" is connected by G. Curtius with the root *ma*, to think, in the sense of excited thought, akin to inspiration (*Gk. Etymol.*, No. 429).

<sup>2</sup> The name "Teiresias" is probably symbolical, and associated with *teras* = a sign, which, again, was probably connected originally with *a-steres*, the stars. The name "Calchas" may perhaps be derived from *kalchaino* = to make or be dark (from *kalchē* = the purple mussel) (cf. Jebb's *Antigone*, note on ver. 20). If this conjecture be correct, then Calchas would = the Seer, darkly-troubled in mind, the man over whom coming events had cast a shadow.

but an honourable title,<sup>1</sup> but that the office of the *mantis* has become a calling followed like other callings, for gain. Reverence for the seer has not yet gone, but there is the lingering doubt whether, indeed, he knows of a surety what he predicts. Thus Telemachus declares, in regard to any expectation of the return of his father Odysseus, that he will no more pay heed to divination whereof his mother may inquire of a diviner, when she hath called him to the hall (*Od.*, i. 415). This may be said, however, to blind the wooers, as at the same time Telemachus is pondering how he may himself go in quest of his father. Of old Priam's opinion, however, there can be no doubt. He says flatly that he undertakes the desperate journey to Achilles, because he has been commanded to do so by an Olympian messenger (Iris). "But," says he, "if any other, of men upon earth, had bidden me do it—whether seers or sacrificing priests—we would declare it false, and abandon it" (*Iliad*, xxiv. 220). Both Priam and Telemachus mean that they will believe nothing at second-hand, nothing that comes to them through the intervention of man; but both are, nevertheless, sincerely religious, for Telemachus is all the while following the leading of Athena; Priam, that of Zeus. Again, both accept the omens of the gods—the flight of birds. There is, however, one of Homer's heroes, also a man of deeply religious nature, who goes so far as to reject these. No grander passage is to be found in the *Iliad* than that in which Hector avows his disbelief in signs. The prodigy of the terrible blood-red snake has just been sent to the Trojans (see *ante*, p. 261) as they are about to storm the Greek wall. Polydamas beseeches him not to proceed, urging the evident purport of the omen as being adverse to them (*Iliad*, xii. 226 *et seq.*): "Many of the Trojans shall we leave behind," he says, "whom the Achæans shall slay with the sword defending their ships. For thus," he adds, "would an interpreter of the god expound it, who had clear knowledge of the omens in his soul, and whom the folk obeyed." Then Hector of the glancing helm looked askance at him, and said: "Polydamas, what thou sayest is no longer pleasing unto me; thou knowest to devise other and better counsel than this. But if in very truth thou speakest this seriously, then of a surety have the gods themselves destroyed thy wits, thou that biddest forget the counsel of loud-thundering Zeus, which himself pledged to me and confirmed with a nod of his head. Thou biddest obey long-winged birds! to whom I neither give heed, nor care whether they speed to the right, to the dawn and the sun, nor yet to the left, to misty darkness. Let us follow the counsel of great Zeus, who ruleth over all, mortals and immortals. ONE omen is best—to fight for the Fatherland!"

The following of the omens, we must recollect, constitutes one great part of the religion of the age. When Agamemnon has been taunting Diomedes that he is not equal in courage to his father Tydeus, Sthenelus, the comrade of Diomedes, says vehemently (*Iliad*, iv. 404): "Lie not, Atreides, seeing thou knowest to speak truth. Far better men than our fathers we avow ourselves to be. We took the seat of Seven-gated Thebes with fewer folk against a stronger wall because we followed the tokens of the gods and the help of Zeus." According to the tradition, the seven ill-fated princes had gone on with the first expedition against Thebes, in spite of the warnings and omens of the gods, and Sthenelus expressly connects the victory of their descendants with the obedience to these warnings. To follow the omens is to secure the help or protection of Zeus.

IV. THE LOT.—Finally, we must not omit to notice another method of finding out the will of the heavenly power, the casting of the lot—a method which must have commended itself to many minds as requiring no human

<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, p. 103.



intervention. Among the Greeks the casting of the lot is no blind appeal to chance, but a religious observance, a committing of the matter in question to the decision of the great Father, in the belief that he will direct the issue. So, before the single combat between Menelaus and Paris, and again, before that between Ajax and Hector, the lots are shaken in a bronze helmet, and the people lift up their hands and pray, "Father Zeus, most glorious, most great! vouchsafe . . ." (*Iliad*, iii. 316; vii. 175). Thus, Hebrews and Hellenes alike regarded the lot as causing contentions to cease, and parting among the mighty; both believed also that although the lot may be cast into the lap by man, yet that "the whole disposing thereof" is of a Higher Power.<sup>1</sup> It is in this sense, as a distinctly religious custom, that we must understand the habitual use of the lot both in Homeric and historic times. The root of the observance is silent appeal to God.

The Oracle, the last and greatest experiment of the Greeks in the ascertaining of the divine will, does not belong to the Homeric age. True, it is mentioned incidentally in Homer, but there is not the slightest evidence that it had any influence on practical life. In Homer we can see only its germs.

In the *Iliad*, Dōdōna is known as the chosen shrine of Zeus, Pytho (Delphi) as that of Apollo. Each is twice referred to, but here there is no mention of the Oracle in connection with either, unless, indeed, we take the name "Pytho" = place of inquiry and the reference to its treasures as an indication that Delphi was already visited by those who wished to consult the god, and brought rich gifts in their hand. "Pytho," however, has a double meaning, and may refer only to the slaying by Apollo of the dragon Python, the great dragon of darkness.<sup>2</sup> In any case, there can be no doubt that even in the *Iliad* Delphi is already famous for its riches, for Achilles says that, in comparison with life, he holds as naught even "all the treasure that the stone threshold of the archer Phœbus Apollo encloseth in rocky Pytho" (*Iliad*, ix. 404). In the Ships' Catalogue again, of later origin, there is a reference to "rocky Pytho and sacred Krisa," the city in the plain beneath Parnassus (*Iliad*, ii. 519).

The two passages in which "wintry Dōdōna" appears are the verse in the Ships' Catalogue already referred to (p. 128), and the famous invocation in the prayer offered by Achilles after he has made libation from the sacred goblet reserved for the worship of Father Zeus: "King Zeus, Dodonæan, Pelasgian, thou that dwellest afar, ruling in wintry Dōdōna, and around thee dwell the Selli, thy prophets, with unwashen feet, couched upon the ground!" (*Iliad*, xvi. 233). Here also the reference to the "prophets" (*hypophetai* = those who expound the will of the god) might indicate the existence of the Oracle. As stated, however, there is no direct reference to such an institution in the *Iliad*. The ordinary signs—the lot and the predictions of the seer—are the only means of ascertaining the divine will.

(2). In the *Odyssey*, however, it is evident that Oracles are both known and used. Thus, Odysseus twice relates in his disguise as the beggar how he had been told by the king of the Thesprotians that Odysseus had gone to Dōdōna "to hear from the high leafy oak of the god the counsel of Zeus" (*Od.*, xiv. 327; xix. 296). And, again, when the hero is sojourning with the Phæacians,

<sup>1</sup> Prov. xviii. 18; xvi. 33. Possibly we have in this most ancient usage one of the traditions carried away from the Ur-home of mankind, a relic of the primæval time when Semites and Aryans still dwelt together. That it was observed by the primitive Aryans before the Separation is proved by the fact that the custom prevailed not only among the Greeks, but also among Romans and Germans. Probably twigs or chips, as being easily marked, were used (Schrader and Jevons, p. 279).

<sup>2</sup> See next Section and *Hellas*, p. 125.

the blind minstrel Demodocus sings at the feast a song, the fame whereof had then reached to wide heaven—the song of the quarrel between Odysseus and Achilles—how they strove together with terrible words at a bounteous festival of the gods, and how Agamemnon rejoiced in his heart when the best of the Achaians fell at variance, “for so had Phœbus Apollo by prophecy told him it must be, when he crossed the stone threshold to inquire of the Oracle. For then was rolling the beginning of woe on both Trojans and Danaans by the counsel of great Zeus” (*Od.*, viii. 79). As stated, however, these passages, although valuable as the earliest references to great historical institutions, carry no weight for the Homeric period. It is evident that if the princes before Troy could have found a way out of their many perplexities by an appeal to an oracle, we should have heard of an embassy either to Dōdōna or to Delphi. And certainly, in the later *Odyssey*, if Telemachus had known of the existence of the Dodonæan Oracle, he would have gone thither to inquire of it concerning the fate of his father, instead of undertaking the journey to question old Nestor. Hence, we are forced to assume that the passages cited belong to late portions of the poems.

### III.—THE GREAT UNWRITTEN LAWS

We now come to look at the Greek Experiments in the Moral Life—in the sphere of duty, the ideas held generally concerning right and wrong, as they meet us in the pages of Homer—that is, if the philosophers will allow that there existed a distinct consciousness of the right and wrong in the Homeric man.

Hegel, for instance, lays it down that “before Socrates there was no morality in Greece, only propriety of conduct.”<sup>1</sup>

There is, however, an older axiom than this, namely, “The tree is known by its fruits.” Whence came this “propriety of conduct”? It must have had its roots somewhere. Hellas was “made” in many respects before Socrates appeared. The wave of Asiatic despotism had been rolled back some 20 years before the great teacher was born. What nerved the nation for the struggle? What had prepared the people for it? Was it mere “propriety of conduct”? We can see at a glance that the dictum of the philosopher is not to be taken without a grain of salt.

Again, the pre-Socratic age has been called the age of Unconscious Morality (Sir A. Grant, *Ethics*, i. 2, 76). This definition is better than Hegel’s, but simple folk find themselves asking: Is there, *pace* the philosophers, such a thing as “unconscious morality”? The most elementary question of right and wrong has to be decided, and the effort required for the decision is perceptible enough in some way or other to the inner consciousness of the person who has to decide. The problem, then, before us is this:—

1. Did the morality of the Homeric Greek consist merely in external “propriety of conduct”—in regulating himself, that is, by tradition, or custom, or laws laid down for him by others?

2. Or, secondly, was it intuitive, as the morality of children is said to be intuitive? Did his actions, that is, spring forth spontaneously, without any exercise, apparently, of the reasoning powers?

<sup>1</sup> “Die Athener vor Socrates waren sittliche, nicht moralische Menschen” (*Geschichte der Philosophie*, ii. p. 43).



3. Or, lastly, is there any evidence that from the beginning the Greek was a law to himself—that he had, that is, the power within himself of discerning right from wrong?

The inquiry is full of interest. We shall find that all three conditions were at work in the Homeric, as they have been in every other age of the world, except the very first. The Homeric morality was, at one and the same time, traditional, intuitional, and the product of his own reasoning powers.

The first thing that presses upon our attention here, as it has so often pressed before, is that we have to do pre-eminently with a thinking people. This has stamped itself unmistakably on their language. There is the clearest evidence that the Greek, even in Homer's time, regarded the thinking and the acting powers within him—mind and will, reflection and resolve—as indissolubly united. Let us prove this:—

1. Knowledge and intention are expressed in Homer by one and the same verb—*eidenai*:—To know “kindly feelings” is to be kindly disposed (*Iliad*, iv. 361; *Od.*, xiii. 405—*epia eidenai*); to know “friendly feelings” is to be friendly (*Iliad*, xvii. 325; *Od.*, iii. 327—*phila eidenai*); to know “wise things” is to be wise of heart (*Iliad*, vii. 278; *Od.*, viii. 586—*pepnumena eidenai*); a man who knows “things pleasing” to others is a man who does them, and is therefore beloved (*Od.*, viii. 584—*kecharismena eidenai*); to know “gratitude” is to be grateful, and express one's thanks (*Iliad*, xiv. 235—*charin eidenai*); to know one's duties is to do them, and so to be trusty and faithful (*Od.*, i. 428—*kednu eidenai*). Is there any evidence here of “unconscious” morality?

Then again, the words which express “to deliberate” and “to will”—*boulesthai*, *bouleuesthai*, *boulê*—are connected together in the closest possible way.

Thus, if language tells us anything at all, it tells us this—that, even in the Homeric age, the intellectual and the moral faculties were used conjointly. Knowledge is presupposed in the moral sphere—a man knows a thing, therefore he does it. Deliberation, taking counsel with oneself, goes before the resolve and the act. “What Socrates and his disciples taught,” says L. Schmidt, “is only the logical following out of the popular idea (concerning the indissoluble union of the will and knowledge—*Will und Einsicht*) as it had been long before incorporated in the language” (*Ethik*, i. 157).

We note next that such deliberation did not turn round the axis of tradition, nor yet of expediency. A man did not ask “How far is it safe or profitable to do this or that?” The great question of right or wrong faced the Homeric man as it faced the contemporaries of Plato and Aristotle, as it faces you and me. The Homeric man had to decide the question by his own standard. *Krino*=I sift, I test, I judge, had to be applied in the moral as in every other sphere, and the capability to do this was the evidence that “childish things” had been left behind.

When Penelope had been upbraiding Telemachus for not having prevented the ill-treatment, in his own house, of the supposed beggar, Odysseus although he (Telemachus) had come to the measure of manhood, the young man replied: “Mother mine, I blame thee not indeed for being wroth. Yet, in my heart I have understanding and knowledge of each thing, of good and of evil; but heretofore I was a child” (*Od.*, xviii. 228).

The power of distinguishing between good and evil, then, was the test of maturity in Homeric days as it was in those of Æschines, the orator, hundreds of years later. In one of his speeches Æschines says that so long as a youth is a minor the legislator speaks to his relations and teachers; but so soon as he has been enrolled as a citizen and knows the laws of the States, and can

distinguish the good from the bad, then the law speaks to himself (*Æsch.*, i. 18. *Cf.* Schmidt, *Eth.*, i. 156).

We feel bound, therefore, to protest against the phrase "unconscious morality" as applicable to the Homeric, any more than to the Socratic age. Call the former an age of "simple, non-complex morality" if you will; but do not let us suppose that in any age of the world men have acted in moral matters as they would not act in the ordinary business of life—on mere intuitions or on the strength of tradition alone. We have already seen tradition questioned and disowned. Priam and Telemachus put no faith in the seer; Hector throws overboard the omens (p. 264); and the same independent judgment is at work in the moral sphere. When life grew more and more complex and the need of an absolute standard more deeply felt, then the philosophers did good service by their efforts to define the standard of right. This, however, is a very different thing from substituting "morality" for "propriety of conduct."

Questions of right and wrong have always presented themselves for decision, and always with new faces. Knowledge has increased, and raised, and often changed the standard of right; but no human being ever yet escaped the necessity of deciding for himself by the highest standard within his reach. Let us now see what the Homeric standard was.

The measure or rule by which a good man and true judges himself and his fellows in Homer is undoubtedly ΔΙΚΗ = justice, "the way pointed out," not only by tradition and custom, but by the higher self, whereby a man may keep the Themistes, the great Unwritten Natural Laws—those laws whose father is high heaven, the laws which "slumber not, for in them is a mighty god and he groweth not old."<sup>1</sup>

It is to these hoary primæval laws that our witness, St. Paul, refers in the Epistle to the Romans.<sup>2</sup> "When," he says, "the nations which have not the law do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which show the work of the law written in their hearts." And he includes the doers of the natural law amongst those who shall be justified before God.

The Greeks themselves recognised the unwritten law, not as a mere tradition preserved by the poets, but as a great and universally known factor existing in their midst, to be taken account of by the practical statesman. Thus, in the memorable funeral oration recorded by Thucydides, Pericles praises the Athenians because, in the midst of the freedom secured to them by just and equal laws, they are yet not forgetful of the unwritten laws (*nomoi agraphoi*) (Thucyd., 2, 37, 3). And the Socrates of Xenophon traces back the unwritten law of justice—the reverence due to the gods, the honour due to parents, the gratitude due to benefactors—to the gods themselves. They are the ordinances not of men, but of the gods, and the proof of their divine origin is, he says, firstly, that they are found everywhere amongst men; and, secondly, that any breach of them carries within itself its own punishment (*Mem.*, 4, 4). As Sophocles says, "A mighty god is in them" as the avenger, "and he grows not old."

It would be easy to draw up a primitive Hellenic Decalogue out of the material to be found in Homer, but the result would be misleading. The Greeks possessed neither Decalogue nor Sacred Books. It is safer, therefore, to infer the nature of the unwritten laws from the evidence contained in *Dikē*

<sup>1</sup> See *ante* on Themis and *Dikē*, p. 240; on the Unwritten Laws, p. 266.

<sup>2</sup> Romans ii. 14, 15.



—"the way pointed out," whereby a man might act justly in every relation of life—towards the gods and towards his fellow-men.

1. The reverence due to the gods is instanced by Socrates as the first of the great unwritten laws, and as such beyond a doubt it figures in Homer. Reverence is due to the immortals, primarily, because of man's dependence on them. This feeling we have seen practically in operation at an earlier stage (p. 228), and it finds expression in Homer also, "All men have need of the gods" (*Od.*, iii. 48).

2. Then, secondly, Zeus is to be revered because the Homeric Greeks, as we have also seen (p. 252), did most unmistakably recognise the existence and presence amongst them of a divine Justice—in our own sense of the word. Zeus, and the gods as his delegates, watch over the great and unwritten laws (although they are nowhere said in Homer to have originally ordained them); and this watchful Justice is called the *Opis* of the gods. To the practical working of the *Opis* in the life of man we shall return again. It is, perhaps, the most remarkable feature in Homer.

*Dikē* = justice, therefore, points out that the right attitude of man towards Zeus and the gods is that of dependence—to be shown—

(a) *In external marks of honour.*—On two occasions the meat offering and the drink offering, placed in seemly wise upon the altar, are called the "right" or the "prerogative" (*geras*) of Zeus and the gods (*Iliad*, iv. 48; xxiv. 66). The offering of perfect "hecatombs" is also said to have been commanded by the gods (*Od.*, iv. 352). As Schœmann (p. 58) remarks, moreover, every meal forms a sacrifice, for a portion of every animal slaughtered is offered to the gods in token of gratitude; and drinking is both begun and ended by libation. The instances of this throughout both *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are innumerable.

(b) *In reverent approach to the Gods.*—One instance of this we have already seen in the libation offered from the sacred goblet by Achilles. Another is afforded by Hector, who (after his death) is said to have been "dearest to the gods of all mortals that are in Ilion," and especially to Zeus, for, says the latter, "in no wise failed he of the gifts that pleased me" (*Iliad*, xxiv. 66). In the case in point, Hector has just returned from the battlefield to the city to bid his mother, Hecabe, summon the aged women to the temple of Athena, and there offer to the goddess that robe which, among all her possessions, is costliest and dearest to herself. Hector is tired and wearied, and Hecabe offers him wine, and presses him to make libation to Father Zeus, and then refresh his strength by a draught of wine. But Hector of the glancing helm made answer: "Bring me no honey-hearted wine, my lady mother, lest thou unnerve me, and I forget my strength and might.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, I have awe to make libation of gleaming wine to Zeus with unwashed hands; nor is it seemly to pray to Kronion of the storm-cloud, defiled by blood and dust" (*Iliad*, vi. 263 *et seq.*).

(c) *In obedience and submission to their decrees.*—When Achilles, in the quarrel with Agamemnon, sheathes his sword at the bidding of Athena, who has been sent by Hera to stay his anger, he says: "Needs must one honour the word of yon twain, goddess, even tho' one be very wroth at heart; for so is the better way. Whosoever obeyeth the gods, to him they gladly hearken" (*Iliad*, i. 216). And, again, the wise-hearted maiden, Nausicaa, reminds the stranger, Odysseus, in the midst of his great trouble, that "Olympian Zeus himself apportioneth happiness to men, to the good and to the evil, to each one,

<sup>1</sup> Or, as in Mr. Leaf's rendering: "Lest thou cripple me of my courage, and I be forgetful of my might."

as he will ; he hath given thee this, thy lot, I ween, and in any wise thou must endure it" (*Od.*, vi. 188).

External marks of honour, then, reverent approach, obedience, and resignation, constitute what justice requires of man in his relation towards the gods.

2. The honour due to parents runs like a golden thread through both *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Thus, the last injunction of noble Odysseus to his wife, on setting out for the war, is this: "Be mindful of my father and mother in the halls, as thou art now, or even more when I am far away" (*Od.*, xviii. 267). Old Nestor, again, implores the Achæans to stand fast in the fight, not only for the sake of children and wives and possessions, but (twice repeated) for the sake of those that begat them, for the sake of parents, whether alive or dead (*Iliad*, xv. 649, 654). And when Odysseus speaks with Achilles in the lower world, the great grief of the hero is lest dishonour should have come upon his old father, Peleus, through loss of him. "Ah!" he says, "could I but come in such wise (as I was before in my might) for a very little while to my father's house, then would I make my strength and my resistless hands a hateful fear to many a one of those who press him hard and keep him from his honour!" (*Od.*, ii. 501). On two different occasions, again, it is said of a hero who falls in battle that "he repaid not his dear parents for their nurture, for short was his span of life" (*Iliad*, iv. 477; xvii. 301). Such passages, implying the sense of obligation towards parents, might easily be multiplied.

The honour due to the aged and to those who, in years and experience, are older than the person who addresses them, is another beautiful feature of this "unconscious age." Thus, old Nestor speaks of the giving of counsel as "the right of the elders" (*Iliad*, iv. 323). Here, the word "right" or "prerogative" —*geras*—is the same as that used in reference to the immortals. Worship is the *geras* = honour to be paid to the gods; respectful attention, the honour due to the aged.

3. The position of the wife in Homer is, strange to say, one far more honourable than that accorded to her in later Greece. This is not contradicted by the fact that the Homeric bride is, after a fashion, purchased by the wooer. He is expected, that is, to show proof of his love by "gifts of wooing" (*hedna*), offered to the father of the lady. Hector, it is said, had given "countless bride-gifts" when he led forth Andromache from the house of her father (*Iliad*, xxii. 472). Penelope, again, is expected to wed the suitor that "offers the most, and comes as the chosen of fate" (*Od.*, xvi. 391; xxi. 161). That these "gifts of wooing" were sometimes substantial enough is evident, if we may deduce Greek customs from the case of a Thracian hero, of whom it is said that he "slept the sleep of bronze, far from his newly-wedded wife," for whom he had given much—100 oxen first, with the promise of 1000 goats and sheep together later (*Iliad*, xi. 241). Hence the epithet which we have already seen applied to much-courtèd damsels (p. 97), *alphesiboiai* = "bringing in oxen" to their relatives. The father fixes the bride-price; but it is interesting to note that, even in Homer, in the case of a "dearly-loved daughter," part of the *hedna* "follows" her to her new home<sup>1</sup> (*Od.*, i. 277; ii. 196). And sometimes she is even provided with a portion. Agamemnon offers to give any one of his daughters to Achilles, not only without exacting "gifts of wooing," but himself furnishing a "great dower (*meilia* = gladdening gifts) such as no man ever yet gave with his daughter" (*Iliad*, ix. 147).

It is necessary to examine this whole question with some minuteness; for,

<sup>1</sup> It is not, however, clear from Homer whether the *hedna* which "follow a child dearly beloved" are not rather wedding gifts from her own kinsfolk and friends. (See *Od.*, i. 277; ii. 196.)



although the statement that "in Homer a wife is purchased by her husband" is true, yet the truth thus bluntly put is not the whole truth. The wife so purchased does not in Homer become her husband's slave. Essential as the "gifts of wooing" doubtless are to the contract, yet they in no wise detract from the position of the wife. Much, rather, are they regarded as a testimony to her worth or her charms. Husband and wife are equally entitled to honour and respect—she is mistress within the house; he is master without. This is evident in many ways; but the relation between husband and wife, as understood by Homer, is most truly and feelingly expressed by the words which he puts into the mouth of Odysseus. "May the gods grant thee," he says to the maiden, Nausicaa, "whatsoever thy heart desireth—a husband and home, and that most excellent gift of unity; for there is naught better or nobler than when husband and wife are of one mind and heart in the house—a grief to foes, to friends great joy, but most of all themselves know the blessing" (*Od.*, vi. 180).

The wife, moreover, is not only honoured, but loved and cherished. "Do the sons of Atreus alone of mortal men love their wives?" asks Achilles in his withering scorn and rejection of the bribes wherewith Agamemnon seeks to conciliate the hero for the wrong done in depriving him of Briseis. "Surely," he says, "every man that is good and wise of heart loves and cherishes his own, even as I loved mine, though she were but won by my spear" (*Iliad*, ix. 340). The argument is not affected by the circumstance that the damsel, Briseis, is not Achilles' "wedded wife," but his captive. Neither must we allow the fact of the irregularities revealed in the camp life of the Achæans—such as the fate of Briseis and other unfortunates enslaved by the spear—to blind us to another fact, viz., the home life of the Homeric age is eminently pure. Certainly Homer gives us both sides of wedded life—over against the unity and love existing between an Odysseus and a Penelope, between an Alcinoüs and an Aretê, we have the discord existing between an Agamemnon and a Clytæmnestra, and the story of a Helen. The same contrast is seen among the Trojans—nothing can be more beautiful than the love of Hector and Andromache; whilst, on the other hand, it is another of old Priam's sons, Paris, who carries off Helen, and old Priam himself is plainly living in polygamy. Nevertheless, the Greeks of Homer are strict monogamists; regular marriage is the rule, and although irregularities take place in the ten years of camp life, yet they are not tolerated in the settled order of home life—witness the punishment of death inflicted by Odysseus on the handmaids who had "brought dishonour" on Penelope during his absence. The morality of Homer must be ranked infinitely higher than that of later Greece.<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps the best ideal of a lady of the heroic age in her capacity as house-mistress is afforded by Aretê, wife of the Phæacian king, Alcinoüs. It is curious to note how closely Aretê approaches the ideal house-mistress, the "virtuous woman" of the wise man.<sup>2</sup> The Hebrew lady "looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness"—the Greek Aretê is constantly seen seated by the hearth, spinning the wool of sea-purple hue, a marvel to behold, in the midst of her handmaids, or looking to the comfort of her children and guests (*Od.*, vi. 52, 305). The Hebrew "openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness"—the Greek is of "excellent understanding, ending the disputes even of men, of those to whom she is kindly disposed" (*Od.*, vii. 73). The Hebrew's children "arise up and call

<sup>1</sup> See on this question Gladstone's *Studies on Homer and the Homeric Age* and Freeman's review of the work in *Historical Essays*, 2nd Series, p. 52 *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> Prov. xxxi. 10.

her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her"—of Aretē it is said that she "hath been, yea, and is honoured from the very heart by her dear children, and by her lord, Alcinoūs, and by the folk; they look upon her as a goddess, and when she walketh through the city greet her with words of welcome" (*Od.*, vii. 69). It is to Aretē, moreover, not to her husband, that Odysseus is advised to apply. He is to "pass by" Alcinoūs and clasp the knees of Aretē (as a suppliant) if he would reach his native land—a proof in its way that women in the heroic age had their say in counsels of state<sup>1</sup> (*Od.*, vi. 310; vii. 75).

We cannot be surprised to find in the daughter of such a mother the "fair flower of maidens," Nausicaa. White-armed, slender as the young shoot of a palm-tree, moving among her maidens as Artemis the archer moved down the mountains among the wood-nymphs, with head and brows high over all, easily known where all are fair, now busily treading the household linen in the flowing river water, now merrily playing at ball with her comrades, Nausicaa is one of the prettiest of old-world pictures. Too coy to speak to her father the word "marriage," she has yet courage enough to keep her presence of mind when the shipwrecked Odysseus emerges like a lion from his hiding-place among the bushes, a fierce satyr of the woods for ought she knows, and to give him food and raiment, rebuking gently her maidens for their foolish fear. "This unhappy one has come hither in his wanderings," she says, "and we must now care for him; for all strangers and beggars are from Zeus, and a little gift is dear" (*Od.*, vi. 206). In her simple piety too she reminds the stranger that one must be resigned to the will of heaven, a lesson which long-suffering, much-enduring Odysseus does not resent from lips so innocent.

Time and space would alike fail us were we to attempt to describe home scenes in Homer. No more tender or touching exist within the whole range of literature than are to be found in this old-world history of life as it was lived some 3000 years ago. To detach them from the context, moreover, is to rob them of their beauty. Scenes such as the parting of Hector from Andromache and the "beautiful star," their infant child, or the mourning of old Priam for his son, or the meeting between Odysseus and his wife, or that between Odysseus and his father, must be read as they flow along in the current of the story, in the very words of Homer.

4. *Ruler and Ruled*.—The relation of a king to his people, as we see it in Homer, is evidently the outgrowth of primitive patriarchal institutions. The house-father has become the clan-father, the clan-father the tribe-father; the tribes unite in time of war and choose from amongst their number one to be the leader. This man is the *basileus*, i.e. "the leader of the people,"<sup>2</sup> and his office becomes hereditary. That kingship has its roots in patriarchal customs is evident from the fact that the king acts as priest; he offers the sacrifices for the people, as the father offers them for the family.

The king, then, is leader and priest, but he is something more. He holds his sceptre directly from Zeus for two other purposes, viz. :—(1) to watch over the *themistes*, the settled customs, for Zeus (*Iliad*, i. 238), i.e. as his deputy; and (2) to take counsel for the people (*Iliad*, ix. 98).

Thus the position of a king in the Homeric age is by no means that of an Eastern despot. It is framed after a beautiful ideal, dating from very early times, and summed up in the phrase so often used, "Shepherd of the People." The king is, in his own person, priest, leader in war, judge, and counsellor of his people.

<sup>1</sup> See also Aretē, *Od.*, xi. 182.

<sup>2</sup> The etymology, however, is by no means certain.



Nevertheless, in none of these capacities may he act arbitrarily. He is surrounded by his counsellors, who speak their mind freely, and are by no means afraid to tell even Agamemnon, king of men, their opinion of him to his face. The king has no guard of honour; his only official followers are the heralds, who have a semi-sacred character.

The reader may possibly say, what has all this to do with religion? A great deal, we reply, inasmuch as it has its roots in religion. The king, in fact, to the Homeric man, is "king by the grace of God"; the *themistes* and the sceptre are entrusted to him by Zeus; therefore submission to law is a religious and moral duty.

*The People.*—We do not hear much of the people in Homer. They are summoned on extraordinary occasions to the agora to listen to the decisions of the Council, of which they are expected to signify approval by cheers. Nevertheless, although the mass of the people do not take part in the discussion, yet the very fact that they are invited to the assembly, and that they do cheer, shows that "public opinion" is already a factor in determining the conduct of affairs.<sup>1</sup>

Much has been made of the chastisement of Thersites in the assembly by Odysseus (*Iliad*, ii. 211 *et seq.*) as a proof that the people in Homer have no rights, and therefore no freedom. The circumstances, however, must be taken into account. It is significant that, when Agamemnon calls to arms the sons of the Achæans, he says that he will "first make trial of them, as is *themis*." That is, there is evidently a *themis* that the king, before proceeding with any matter of importance, must first find out the mind of the people. He proposes, therefore, on the occasion alluded to, that they shall give up the war and return home. That this is the mind of the people there can be no doubt; they rush to the beach, and begin dragging down the ships to the sea. The whole object of the expedition, the punishment of the Trojans, is thus jeopardised, and so imminent is the danger that Athena herself darts down from the peaks of Olympus and bids Odysseus immediately restrain the people. The masterful manner in which the hero of many devices obeys this command is certainly amusing enough. Armed with the sceptre of Agamemnon, he hastens amidst the throng, and whenever he finds a king or a man of note he addresses him with courteous words, and reminds him that it is not seemly to be affrighted thus. But, we read, when he found a man of the people shouting, "him he drave with the sceptre, and chode with loud words, 'Good sir, sit still, and hearken to the words of others that are thy betters. . . . In no wise can we Achæans all be kings here. No good comes of a multitude of masters. Let one be ruler, one be king, even he to whom the son of crooked-counselling Kronos (Zeus) gave the sceptre and the judgments (*themistes*), that he should bear rule.'" Thus masterfully he ranges the army, and succeeds in driving the folk back to the place of assembly, the agora, to hear reason. Thersites alone, the little, shrill-voiced, ill-favoured demagogue, will not sit still. Up he gets and harangues his comrades, reviling Agamemnon, and inciting the

<sup>1</sup> "We may well believe that the Old-English Witenagemot was an imperfect way of expressing public opinion; the king and a few great earls had, doubtless, most of the talk, and to say 'Nay, nay,' instead of 'Yea, yea,' was most likely a rare and extreme measure. . . . But there is all the difference in the world between an assembly which dares not oppose and an assembly which has not yet formed the wish to oppose. In the one case it is the relation of slaves to their master, in the other it is that of children to their father. . . . Odysseus and Godwine could sway assemblies of men by the force of eloquence. We need no further argument to show that the assemblies which they addressed were assemblies of freemen" ("The Homeric Assembly," *Freeman's Histor. Essays*, ii. p. 85).

Achæans to flee. The accusations which he brings against Agamemnon, let us note, are to a certain extent true; therefore, when Odysseus bids him be silent, and enforces the command with a blow from the sceptre, the whole proceeding appears at first sight arbitrary and unjust. Nevertheless, Odysseus is in the right. The sceptre with which Agamemnon has entrusted him is not only the symbol of justice, but the marshal's baton. This point is apt to be overlooked, although the poet has emphasised it by the remark: "Thus masterfully did he range the army"—*straton*; not the people—*laon*. It must be borne in mind that the *Iliad* describes camp-life, the life of an army, supposed to be under discipline. Thersites has committed the worst offence against military notions—in time of war, at a crisis, he has denounced the commander-in-chief in no measured words, and incited to rebellion. In historic times, even at certain epochs in our own country, Thersites would certainly not have escaped with a drubbing; a noose and the nearest tree would have been his fate.

Or again, if we regard the Agora as, even during the campaign, a civil institution, Thersites is "out of order." As Schœmann points out, he has failed to comply with the rules; the heralds have not handed him the orator's staff, and consequently he has no right to speak in the Assembly. So that, in whichever way we look at the occurrence, we cannot deduce from it as a "fact" that the people in Homer have no freedom. The very reverse may be inferred from the episode. The whole germ of the later political development lies in the *themis* which rendered the consent of the people necessary as a supplement to the decisions of the council. The whole germ of later freedom of speech lies in the fact that this Thersites was in the habit of reviling the kings, and that he had not before been interfered with. It would seem, indeed, as though Odysseus were now glad of a legitimate opportunity of paying off old scores. And the curious thing is that the comrades of Thersites, although they are sorry for him, yet laugh and approve of the punishment. The innate sense of order in the Greek mind is predominant, for thus would one speak, looking at his neighbour: "Fie on it! of a truth hath Odysseus already wrought good deeds without number . . . but now hath he done this thing, the best by far among the Argives, in that he hath stayed this railing fellow from his harangues."<sup>1</sup> The demagogue had thus the ill-luck to make his appearance in Greek society a few centuries too early.

The character of the Greek people, the assembled warriors of all nations, is perhaps best seen in the two passages which contrast their march with that of the Trojans (*Iliad*, iii. 1-9; iv. 427-438). In both, the Trojans and their foreign allies clamour and shout as they go—the confused noise of the host and the mingling of strange tongues being likened, in the one case, to the cries of birds, "cranes flying from the winter rains," in the other, to the bleating of sheep separated from their lambs; but the Danaans march in silence. Even as a great wave gathers its forces silently, far out at sea, long before it breaks, billowing on the beach, "so moved in close array the ranks of the Danaans, without pause, to the battle. Each captain gave the word, the rest went silently—nor wouldest thou think that the great host which followed had any voice within their breasts—in silence feared they their leaders."<sup>2</sup> The "fear," here (*deos*), is not slavish, grovelling fear like that of the Persian forces, driven to battle before the lash, but a fear akin to awe—reverence for their leaders and their personal valour.

<sup>1</sup> Literally, his throwing about of words.

<sup>2</sup> *Semantoras*, literally, "those who gave the signals." The word brings out admirably the silent order of the march.



The companion passage completes the picture: "In silence moved the Achæans, breathing courage, eager at heart to give help one to another."

The one passage might stand for a description of the grand, silent run down the hill-side at Marathon, when the little Greek force broke on the Persian hosts unexpectedly, as the wave bursts upon the promontories and the shore far up into the land. The other reads like a prediction of the generous deeds of the Athenians at Salamis and at Plataea—"breathing courage" into all the rest, only anxious to "give succour," haggling neither for place nor fame, if so be that Hellas might be saved, "the Achæans marched in silence."

The reader may ask again, what has all this to do with religion? And again we reply, a great deal! The one host is said to be led by Ares, murderous Ares, who will fight for either side, provided he can but glut his thirst for blood; the other by bright-eyed Athena, wisdom, self-restraint, war undertaken in a just and righteous cause.

Thus the love of order, the recognition of the necessity of discipline, which form so essential a feature in the Hellenic character, and in the building up of Hellas, meet us already, markedly developed, in Homer. Subordination to rightful authority is the rule expected to be observed by every one, from highest to lowest. Achilles, *e.g.* is a royal prince in no way dependent upon Agamemnon (Agamemnon is not his suzerain as he is that of Menelaus and Diomedes); yet, because he has joined the expedition and taken service under the king of men, he is pledged to obedience. Old Nestor himself reminds him that "no common honour falleth to the lot of a sceptred king, to whom Zeus giveth glory. Though thou be very strong and a goddess-mother bare thee, yet he is mightier, for he ruleth over more" (*Iliad*, i. 280). Achilles himself loyally acknowledges the obligation of submission until the arrogance and injustice of Agamemnon pass all bounds. Even then he does not oppose by force the seizure of Briseis.

It is, however, a strange thing, and yet a remarkable proof of the cosmopolitan character of Homer, that it is not into the mouth of the Greek Achilles, nor yet into that of his noblest foe, the Trojan Hector, that the poet puts the most generous estimate of the duties of a leader of the people. It is the Lycian prince, Sarpedon, said to be a "son of Zeus," who sets forth the obligations of those in high places. The occasion is the storming of the Greek rampart. The fighting on both sides is desperate, yet we read, never would the Trojans, no, nor even glorious Hector, have taken the wall had not Zeus, the counsellor, urged his son Sarpedon on the Argives, like a lion upon the horned kine. "Glaucus," says Sarpedon to his comrade-in-arms as they stand together, "wherefore have we twain honour above others—the chief places, and the best portions, and full cups—in Lycia, and all men look upon us as gods? And wherefore hold we a great demesne on the banks of Xanthos, a beautiful land of orchards and wheat-bearing fields? It now behoves us to take our stand in the forefront of the Lycians, and to take our share in fiery battle, so that some of the strong-amassed Lycians may speak thus: 'Verily, not inglorious are our kings that now hold sway in Lycia—they that eat fat sheep and drink choice wine, honey-sweet—for truly their strength is noble, and they fight in the forefront of the Lycians! . . . On then! whether we bring glory to others, or others to us!' Thus he spake, and Glaucus turned not away, neither was disobedient, and they twain went straight forward, leading the great host of the Lycians" (*Iliad*, xii. 310-330), with the result that the scale of victory is turned by the final onset of impetuous Hector—the Greek defences are taken.

It is curious to note in this naïve old-world chronicle, not only the doctrine of *noblesse oblige*, but the very same problems that beset us at the present day. The comment of the imaginary Lycian onlooker presupposes, on his part, the question put by Sarpedon to Glaucus—"Why should we twain be honoured above others merely because we are princes? Why should 'the many' sup barley-porridge by the roadside, whilst 'the few' have seats of honour and eat the fat and drink the sweet?" Here is the modern conflict between "classes and masses," as it appeared nearly three thousand years ago. We meet it again in the speech of Thersites. The demagogue reviles Agamemnon because of his wealth—because his tents are filled with treasures, "choice booty which we Achæans give thee first of all, whenever we sack a town" (*Iliad*, ii. 206). "We Achæans give thee." Here is the "unearned increment" with a vengeance. As we have seen, however, the reproach is not unjust; for it must be remembered that Achilles also accuses Agamemnon of taking his ease by the ships and appropriating to himself the spoils which others have toiled for in the licensed piracy of war (*Iliad*, ix. 328 *et seq.*).

If the problem meets us here, so also does the remedy, put by the wise old master into the mouth of the noble son of a divine sire: "It behoves us who eat the fat and drink the sweet to stand in the very forefront of the fighters!" says Sarpedon. "It is our bounden duty, the way pointed out by Dike, justice. Let us take our due share, then, in the fiery battle of life, so that the toilers by necessity may look upon us, and say without a sneer, 'Verily, their dainty nurture, their culture availeth somewhat, for their strength is noble!'" So, joining hands with the toilers, by the united forces of classes and masses may the strongest rampart be forced, the gravest social problem solved, *noblesse oblige*!

5. *Friend and Friend*.—"Truly in no whit worse than a brother is a comrade that hath an understanding heart," says Alcinous, the generous king of the Phæacians (*Od.*, viii. 585), and the sentiment is echoed throughout both *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. The love of Achilles for Patroclus was as proverbial in Hellas as that of David for Jonathan in Israel. When Patroclus falls, the love of life departs from Achilles; thenceforward he has but one wish—to avenge the death of his comrade. The grudge against Agamemnon, the expectation of returning to his native land, the hope of seeing his old father, Peleus, are alike swallowed up in this mighty grief. Achilles will avenge Patroclus on Hector, even although he knows that the death of Hector is the presage and signal of his own (*Iliad*, xviii. 95). What greater love can a man show than that he will die for his friend? In his measure, Achilles understood the force of the argument—in his barbaric way he fulfilled the obligation.

#### IV.—THE OATH AND HOSPITALITY

6. *Sacredness of the Oath*.—The keeping of the oath of the Covenant is one of the most sacred of obligations in Homer. It forms, in fact, one of those germs of international law, which will engage our attention immediately. The extreme importance with which it was regarded is evident both from the minuteness wherewith the ceremonial is described, and the formulæ used by prince and people, when Achæans and Trojans meet to pledge one another with trusty oaths. The old king, Priam, who on other occasions is represented by his son Hector, is specially summoned to appear *in propria persona* as the head of the Trojan race. He drives them down to the plain in his chariot,



accompanied by the heralds bearing the faithful faith-offerings for the gods—two lambs and strong-hearted wine, fruit of earth, in a goat-skin bottle, together with the shining bowl and golden cups wherewith to make libation. Old Priam alights in the midst of the assembled hosts of Trojans and Achæans (*Iliad*, iii. 264 *et seq.*). Then uprise Agamemnon, king of men, and Odysseus of many devices, representatives of the assembled Greek nations. The courteous heralds gather together the holy oath-offerings, mingle the wine in the bowl, and pour water, as a ceremonial purification, on the hands of the kings. "And Atreides put forth his hand and drew his knife . . . and cut off the hair from the head of the lambs, and this the heralds distributed among the chief of the Trojans and Achæans" (as a pledge and reminder, apparently). Then in their midst Agamemnon prayed aloud, with uplifted hands: "Father Zeus, that rulest from Ida, most glorious, most great, and thou, Helios (the sun), who seest all things and hearest all things, and ye rivers, and thou earth, and ye that beneath the earth punish men whose toil is ended (the dead), whosoever sweareth falsely: be ye witnesses and guard the faithful oath!" Then follows the special prayer, after which the sacrifice is offered; the throats of the lambs are cut by the pitiless knife of Agamemnon and the animals laid gasping upon the ground; the cups are then filled from the bowl, and the wine poured forth in libation to the gods that live for ever. The last ceremony is most impressive of all, for, as the wine is being poured out, thus would many a one say of Achæans and Trojans: "Zeus, most glorious, most great, and all ye immortal gods! which folk soever (Trojans or Achæans) first bring misery by breaking the oath, may their brains be poured forth upon the ground as this wine, theirs and their children's, and may their wives be made subject to strangers!" (*Iliad*, iii. 298).

We cannot be surprised, therefore, to read that after the breaking of the oath by the Trojan Pandarus, when Athena had "persuaded his senseless heart" to shoot at Menelaus, Agamemnon regards the occurrence as a sign of the impending doom of the Trojans. "Ye Argives!" he says, "in no wise abandon your impetuous valour, for Father Zeus will be no helper of liars. But as they have been the first to do mischief against the oaths, so now, surely, shall these vultures eat their own tender flesh, and we shall lead away their wives and their little ones to the ships when once we have taken the citadel" (*Iliad*, iv. 234).

The Trojans, on their part, are completely discouraged: "Now are we fighting falsely against the faithful oath," says the Trojan Antenor, "therefore there is no profit for us" (*Iliad*, vii. 357). In the acute sense of the impending doom even Paris has a share, and is moved to offer the restoration of the wealth which he had taken from the Greek Menelaus, and to add more thereto as compensation. The real cause of the war, however, Helen, he will not give up. The opinion of the Greeks as to this offer is expressed in the words of Diomedes: "Let no one now," he says, "accept the wealth of Alexander (Paris), nor yet Helen herself. Known is it, yea, even to him that is but a babe, how that already the issues of destruction hang over the Trojans" (*Iliad*, vii. 400), and all the Achæans applaud the saying. Thus, the breaking of the faithful oath and covenant made with sacrifice is regarded by both peoples as fatal to the cause of Troy. So inexplicable to the mind of Homer is the committing of such a sin, that he can only attribute it to the prompting of one of the gods (Athena), they being, in his view, not subject to the same code of honour as mortals.

But how about *eteon*, that curious derivative of the verb "to be"—"being" opposed to "seeming"—with which the Aryans marched out of the Old Home?

Have the Greeks preserved the desire for reality, for truth, or lost it? There is a fourfold testimony at the least to its preservation and development:—

(a) The testimony of Achilles: "Hateful to me as the gates of hell<sup>1</sup> is he who hideth one thing in his heart and uttereth another" (*Iliad*, ix. 312).

(b) The testimony of Odysseus: "Hateful to me as the gates of hell is he who, yielding to poverty, speaketh guile" (*Od.*, xiv. 156).

(c) The testimony of Telemachus: "To speak truth is dear to me" (*Od.*, xvii. 15).

(d) The testimony of old Nestor concerning Menelaus: "He will not tell thee a lie, for"—note!—"he is very wise" (*Od.*, iii. 326).

But how does all this tally with the profound respect entertained by the heroes for Odysseus, "the man of wiles"? Here we must bear in mind that curious transition which we have already noticed as made, not only in Greek but in all languages, from the early and honourable sense of skill, ingenuity, in such words as "craft," "cunning," and other cognate terms, to the sense in which we now use them. Odysseus, in the *Iliad*, is a man of many wiles in the sense of being a man of "many devices"—ever ready with counsel, of good mother-wit, fertile in suggestion and resource. He bears the same character in the *Odyssey* in reference to the stratagems by which he and his comrades escape from the clutches of the Cyclops, from the snares of Circe and the sirens, and the dangers of Scylla and Charybdis. It is in this sense that we must understand his own words when making himself known to the Phæacians: "I am ODYSSEUS, son of Laertes, who am well known to men for all manner of guile, and my fame reacheth unto heaven!" (*Od.*, ix. 19). Would Odysseus willingly give himself a bad character to the very people on whom he is depending for his return home? We trow not. The *doloi*=stratagems, "all manner of guile," on which he prides himself—literally, "baits for fish"—are simply instances of his ingenuity in extricating himself and others from perils. Among these may be included the masterful way in which he gets the people back to the Assembly, "partly by wiles of courtesy." In the same sense must be taken the famous dialogue with Athena, in which the goddess compliments him on his ready wit—he is the first of all mortals in counsel and speech, as she herself among the gods is famed for "wit and wiles" (*Od.*, xiii. 297).

Naturally, there are all the materials here, as well as in the stories which the ready-witted hero invents in his disguise, for the transformation which the character of Odysseus undergoes later at the hands of the tragic writers and of the Latin poets. In no respect has "long-suffering" Odysseus suffered more than in the treatment whereby the noble-hearted, steadfast hero of both *Iliad* and *Odyssey* becomes the Mephistopheles of later writers, the originator of every mean and cruel artifice necessary for the concoction of a plot. It would be well indeed to apply the Latin name "Ulysses" to this perversion, this monster of craft in the late sense,<sup>2</sup> and keep the Greek name "Odysseus" for the true-hearted man of strength, the real hero of Homer, the justest of kings and best of masters.

What the Achæans think of Odysseus is well seen in the words of noble Diomedes—himself the most sterling of characters—when he is advised to take a companion with him on the reconnoitring expedition to the camp of the Trojans (*Iliad*, x. 242): "If, indeed, ye bid me choose for myself a comrade, how then could I be unmindful of godlike Odysseus, whose heart is right eager

<sup>1</sup> Hades=Lord of Death, or the region of the dead.

<sup>2</sup> "Ulysses may pass, and welcome, as the cruel and crafty sinner of the *Æneid*, but let us keep unhurt in name, as well as in character, the true and brave and wise Achaian hero, the divine Odysseus of Homer" (Freeman, *Hist. Essays*, 2nd Series, p. 55).



and his spirit so manful in all manner of toils? And Pallas Athena loves him. While he cometh with me, out of burning fire should we both return, for his understanding is excellent."

Such is the man of "many devices" in the judgment of those who know him best.

7. *Hospitality*.—The due of the stranger, the suppliant, the beggar, to help and kindly treatment is a duty which in early days, more than any other, falls within the domain of religion. To reverence the gods, to honour parents, the aged, and the king, to cherish the wife, to be faithful to friends—these are all duties dictated by natural piety as concerned with the immediate circle of the individual. When we remember, however, that in the earliest times *xenos* (= "guest-friend") meant "enemy," "foe," we can see that another influence must have been at work here to effect so significant a transformation. The intercourse promoted by commerce naturally helped to break down national prejudices (see *ante*, p. 188); but the main factor in the change is undoubtedly the gradual development of the belief that all such helpless beings were under the special protection of Zeus Xenios, the god of the stranger.

The position of those who stood outside of legal rights has been well set forth by Hermann: "the living community of interests and of sentiment that existed among members of the same states," he says, "was in antiquity the strongest guarantee of public rights. Where this community of interests ceased a man had no rights, even in historic times. Foreigner and foe were reckoned as one and the same, and even different states had no rights in relation to another. When war broke out, it threatened everything that men held dear; no means were left untried to secure the victory, and once won, the victor had absolute power over the person and the possessions of the vanquished; the defenceless were not spared; robbery on a great, and robbery on a small scale were alike honourable. The only laws recognised, even in historic times, were those which bound a man to his particular state. Beyond the bounds of his own state every man was beyond the bounds of law and had no rights. If he wished to settle in another state, he had first to see to his own personal safety. Slavery is only a natural consequence of this principle, which bound up the rights and personality of the man with his own state. This explains the fact that a sentence of perpetual exile, which meant civic death, was regarded as tantamount to a sentence of death.

To believe that the suppliant (the enemy, it may be, within our power), or the hated foreigner, or the wanderer without shelter, had any rights—dues to be paid to him by those more happily placed than himself—this required in early days a motive-power stronger than the natural feelings of pity and compassion. This motive-power was supplied by religion—the "fear of God," as we should say, the "*opis* of the gods" as Homer would say. "Religion, the nourisher of all higher perception in man, came to the rescue," says Hermann, "and just where earthly protection failed, Zeus took under his care the traveller and the homeless."

The exercise of hospitality to the Homeric man, therefore, was a duty as distinctly religious as are almsgiving and charitable works to the Christian of the present century. To neglect this duty, or worse, to treat its sacred obligations with contempt, is to bring down the wrath of the gods, not only on the individual himself, but on his city.

Let us look at a few instances in point.

(a) *The Guest-friend*.—The reader will doubtless recollect that wondrous interchange of gifts whereby the Lycian prince, Glaucus, made so bad a bargain—giving to the Greek Diomedes golden armour of the value of 100 oxen

and receiving in return bronze armour of the value of 9 oxen (*Iliad*, vi. 119, 236). This interchange of gifts is a token that these two who are foes, inasmuch as they are fighting on opposite sides, will regard each other henceforward as "guest-friends" (*xenoi*). They have discovered that on one occasion Bellerophon, grandfather of Glaucus, had been received hospitably and entertained for twenty days by Oeneus, grandfather of Diomedes. Bellerophon and Oeneus were, therefore, "guest-friends," and their descendants stand in the same relation one to the other. "Therefore," says Diomedes, "I am now a dear guest-friend to thee in Argos, and thou to me in Lycia, whensoever I may come to your land." And he proposes that they shall shun each other's spears in the throng—there are Trojans and Achæans enough for each to slay without harming his guest-friend. Then the two heroes, leaping from their chariots, clasp each other's hands, interchange gifts as pledges of good faith, and thus publicly avow themselves to be, although nominally foes, yet in reality friends at heart, in virtue of the sacred obligation of a hereditary "guest-friendship."

That the guest-friendship was recognised as a real obligation, not one existing in name only, is evidenced incidentally by the story of Lycaon, a son of old Priam (*Iliad*, xxi. 34 *et seq.*). Him Achilles took captive in his father's orchard, and sold as a slave to Lesbos, where he was set free by a "guest-friend," who, it is said, "gave much for him," and put Lycaon in the way of returning secretly to his father's house. The guest-friendship was thus an institution of the greatest practical value in early times. The iniquitous return made by Paris for the hospitality of Menelaus, to whose house he had come as a guest, is emphasised over and over again in the *Iliad* as the cause of the Trojan War and of the destruction of Troy. To this we shall recur shortly. Meantime, let one quotation, the prayer of Menelaus, suffice (*Iliad*, iii. 351). "King Zeus," he says before the single combat between himself and Paris, "grant me to punish him who was first to do me wrong, and subdue thou him under my hands; so that many a one of men that are yet to come, may shudder to work evil to his host, that hath shown him kindness." The guest-friendship is, in fact, like the keeping of the oaths, one of those germs of international law which form the basis of mutual trust between nation and nation.

The indissoluble bond between hospitality and religion is seen in the exclamation repeatedly put into the mouth of Odysseus when arriving on an unknown coast: "Ah me! to what mortal's land am I now come? Are they violent and wild and unjust, or guest-loving and of God-fearing mind?" (*Od.*, vi. 119; ix. 175; xiii. 201).

(b) The *Suppliant* (*hiketes*) is a man in a worse plight even than the stranger in a strange land, for he requires not only hospitality but some special help. Often he combines both characters, as in the case of a man fleeing from the avenger of blood (*Od.*, xv. 277).

The suppliant indicates his need silently by casting himself at the feet of the person of whom the boon is to be craved, and clasping his knees, as Thetis clasps the knees of Zeus, Odysseus those of Arete, old Priam those of Achilles. If possible, the appeal is made by the family hearth, whereon burns the sacred fire of the home, emblem of family affection and the sacred fires which knit man to his fellowman.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, no sooner has Odysseus clasped the knees of Arete, and made his prayer for help that he may come to his own land, than he sits down among the ashes on the hearth by the fire

<sup>1</sup> *Hestia*, the sacred fire on the hearth, is not in Homer yet personified, although we have the expression, "the sacred hearth" of Odysseus.



(*Od.*, vii. 153 *et seq.*). The Phæacian nobles assembled at the banquet in the hall of Alcinous are taken by surprise (for Odysseus has entered unperceived, concealed in a thick mist which Athena shed about him), and a dead silence falls upon all. At length an ancient lord remonstrates: "Alcinous," he says, "this is truly not the more excellent way, nor is it fitting that the stranger should sit upon the ground in the ashes by the hearth. These men wait thy command. Nay, come! bid the stranger rise and set him on a silver inlaid chair and do thou bid the henchmen mingle the wine, that we may pour forth before Zeus, whose joy is in the thunder, who accompanieth reverend suppliants. Let the housewife give food to the stranger of the stores that are within." Thus reminded of his duty, King Alcinous bids his son give place, and sets the stranger next himself. And afterwards it is repeated that libation was made by all to "Zeus, who accompanieth reverend suppliants."

Here, again, we see the close connection between the distressed and Father Zeus. It is still further emphasised by Odysseus himself in his speech to the Cyclops, the gigantic one-eyed shepherd (*Od.*, ix. 266). "We are come," he says, "as suppliants to thy knees, if perchance thou wilt furnish the host's gift, or some little present, such as is the due (*themis*) of strangers. Nay, O mighty one, revere the gods. We are thy suppliants. Zeus is the avenger of suppliants and of strangers—Zeus, who companyeth with reverend strangers."<sup>1</sup>

Most beautiful of all Homeric "texts" on the subject, however, is the remark put into the mouth of the worthy king Alcinous. Referring to the noble gifts collected by the Phæacians out of friendship for Odysseus, he says (*Od.*, viii. 546): "In a brother's place stand the stranger and the suppliant to the man whose wits reach ever so little way."

(c) *The Wanderer and the Beggar*.—The duty of hospitality is, however, not confined to a kind reception of their equals in station as guest-friends and suppliants by the rich, the stranger of whatever rank is entitled to a welcome. He is received in the halls, entertained at the board, and not until he is refreshed with food are any questions asked as to his name and business (*Od.*, i. 123; iii. 69). Specially welcome are the demiourgi, the workers for the people—seer, physician, carpenter, and minstrel—but even the beggar has his rights. It is disguised as a beggar that Odysseus returns to his own halls; because he knows that he will be admitted and will thus have an opportunity of testing for himself the disposition, and observing the conduct of those under his roof. It is, too, concerning the ill-treatment in the halls of this supposed beggar by the Wooers, that Penelope reproaches her son (see *ante*, p. 267) he had not prevented it, although now a man. Telemachus makes answer that he is no longer a child, for he can discern Good from Evil; but that the Wooers hinder him from doing the Good, *i.e.* protecting the stranger, strictly, as we have seen, a religious duty.

"The stranger and the beggar," says Nausicaa, "are from Zeus, and a little gift is dear."

(d) *Those who have no rights*.—In the prisoners of war and the slave we touch two classes of unfortunates who are not thought to be from Zeus. The Father can be claimed as Xenios, god of the stranger, and as Hikesios, god of the suppliant; there are, perhaps, Erinyes, avengers of the beggar, but there is no god specially watching over the captive of the spear, no avenger of the slave. The reason is not far to seek; both have lost their individuality—it is merged in that of their master.

<sup>1</sup> The word translated reverend (*aidoios*) means "worthy of pity not so much for themselves as on account of their misfortunes." See next section.

*The Captive of the Spear.*—At the banquet of the Phæacians, Odysseus weeps, unobserved by all but the kindly Alcinous. His tears are caused by the minstrel's lay. Demodocus has sung of the sack of Troy, and Homer likens the grief of Odysseus to that of those who are led away into captivity (*Od.*, viii. 523 *et seq.*). "As a woman mourns, clasping her dear lord, who had fallen before his city and people, warding off the pitiless day from his town and children; she sees him gasping and struggling with death, and throws herself round him with piercing cries; while the foemen behind smite her with spears on back and shoulders, and lead her up into bondage to bear toil and woe, and her cheeks are wasted away by misery most pitiful, even so pitifully fell the tears from beneath the brows of Odysseus."

Many such scenes must the hero have witnessed. It is the fate which Hector fears for Andromache—a captivity worse than death—and there is no thought of God to mitigate its horrors. True, the captive may be ransomed, as Lycaon is by the guest-friend (p. 280); but the ransom may be refused, as in the case of the damsel Chryseis (*Iliad*, i. 12 *et seq.*). Agamemnon is ultimately forced to give her back to her father; but this is only because that father happens to be a priest of Apollo, and the god intervenes. The vast majority of captives naturally could not hope to be ransomed, and their fate forms one of the darkest chapters in the history of man.

*The Slave.*—In Homer we see the best side only of the institution of slavery, for it is to the household of Odysseus that we are introduced, a man of whom Eumæus, the swineherd, one of his thralls, says: "Never again shall I find a lord so gentle, how far soe'er I may go, not even were I to come again to the house of my father and mother" (*Od.*, xiv. 138). Naturally, the treatment of "property" depends on the disposition of the owner.

Moreover, Eumæus himself is as exceptional a slave as Odysseus is a master. To begin with, he is a slave by accident, not by birth; a king's son, he has been kidnapped by greedy Phœnician merchant-men and sold as a child into bondage. Hence he has no slave blood in his veins, no taint derived from a long heritage of willlessness and degradation.

Then, again, Eumæus himself is, morally, one of the noblest characters in the whole range of Homeric creations. In every way he fulfils the obligations of Themis and Dike; he has his own reverent ideas about the gods. "Verily," he says, "the blessed gods love not violence, but they reverence justice and the righteous deeds of men;" he is most loyal and faithful to the family of the master whom he reveres, guarding their interests as if they had been his own; and out of the humble means at his disposal he is generous to the wanderer and the beggar. He, too, like Nausicaa, knows that "from Zeus are all strangers and beggars," and he knows, too, about the "little gift"—"from such as we," he says, "a little gift is dear" (*Od.*, xiv. 83; 57).

In short, Eumæus cannot be reckoned amongst the slave "rank and file." In every way he is what Homer calls him, "a leader of men" (*Od.*, i. 428)—in every way entitled to a foremost place.

Eurycleia, also, the trusty nurse of Odysseus, is another example of the same class. It is probable that she, too, was freeborn, for it is expressly said that she was "the daughter of Ops, son of Peisenor," and that old Laertes, the father of Odysseus, who had bought her in her youth for the value of twenty oxen, honoured her as he honoured his dear wife in the halls.<sup>1</sup> She would appear, therefore, to have been sold by her own father—a custom legalised in Thebes in historic times. Like Eumæus, she too is devout and faithful in all things, small and great. She has direction of the fifty women-servants in the house

<sup>1</sup> Yet Eurycleia is no Hagar (*Od.*, i. 433).



of Odysseus. "These," she tells him, "we teach to work, to card wool, and to bear bondage" (*Od.*, xxii. 422)—a significant phrase. Think of the millions taught throughout antiquity, and even, to our shame, in Christian times, to bear bondage in the sense of absolute dependence on the will of an irresponsible owner—taught to become the "living tools" of Aristotle—and what a gulf of misery do we open up!

There is no god of the slave in Homer. As the "divine" swine-herd Eumæus says: "The half of his uprightness (*aretē*) doth far-seeing Zeus take from a man, when the day of slavery cometh upon him" (*Od.*, xvii. 322).

(8) *Right of Burial or Burning*.—The due of the dead, finally, is burial or burning. Thus, before the single combat with Ajax, and again before the final struggle with Achilles, Hector makes the condition that the body of the hero who falls is to be given back to his friends—his own, should he die, to be taken to his home, that Trojans and Trojan women may give him his "due of fire" in his death (*Iliad*, vii. 79).

It is the "due" or right of the dead, inasmuch as the departed spirit cannot be received into Hades, the abode of the dead, until the body is consumed or returned to earth. Thus, the ghost of Patroclus appears to Achilles, and prays the hero to bury him with all speed, that so he may "pass the gates of Hades" (*Iliad*, xxiii. 74). The reverent disposal of the dead is, therefore, not merely dictated by natural feeling but by religious motives which acted so powerfully that the affording of opportunity for the burial of the dead formed the third of the primitive bases of international law which we have been considering. To refuse a truce in time of war, for the burial of the dead, is criminal on the part of the conqueror; to delay asking it is equally criminal on the part of the losing side, even although the request be an acknowledgment of defeat. When the Trojans, in their discouragement after the breaking of the oaths, send a herald to the Greek camp with the offer of a return of the riches stolen by Paris, they couple with it a request for them to bury their dead—a request which, together with the offer, convinces the Greeks that the Trojans' day of doom has come. The offer, as we have seen, is refused; "but," says Agamemnon, "touching the dead, I deny you not to burn them, for there is no stinting of dead bodies, when once they are dead, of the swift propitiation of fire" (*Iliad*, vii. 408).

The due of the dead is, therefore, the last claim of *dikē*, and to refuse to acknowledge it is to carry enmity and hatred beyond the grave.

## THE HOMERIC IDEALS

This rapid survey of the great unwritten laws in operation has enabled us to form some estimate at least of the bases of morality among the Homeric Greeks. Let us now take a glance, equally brief, at their ideals. These may be summed up in three words: *Dikē*=justice, *Aretē*=manliness, *Aidos*=reverence. Justice, manliness, reverence!—a noble trio and well worthy of our consideration.

(1) *Dikē*=justice, is, of course, simply the "more excellent way" in all the relations of life—the way whereby a man may walk steadfastly in the unwritten laws, giving reverence to whom reverence is due, honour to whom honour, custom to whom custom—to all, their rights.

(2) *Aretē* corresponds to the Latin *vir-tus*, a term generally rendered as "virtue," but which, as we all know, originally signified "valour," bravery.

Courage against the foe is the first requisite in early times, that a man may defend those dependent on him; courage in later times is no less necessary, that a man may defend the right—courage from first to last is the essence of manliness. Hence *aretē* came to mean all that makes a man a MAN in the eyes of others—physical excellence, beauty, swiftness of foot, moral and intellectual excellence, all are summed up in *aretē*.

Thus, of a hero it is said that he excelled “in all kinds of manliness (*pantoias aretas*)—in swiftness of foot, in battle, in wisdom he was the first among the Mycenæans” (*Iliad*, xv. 642).

*Aretē* was thus the union of the qualities which attract attention and confer distinction, and hence it signified that which was so (Schmidt, i. 294) characteristically, inexpressibly dear to the Hellenic mind—fame, glory.<sup>1</sup> In this sense we find it applied to the gods (*Iliad*, ix. 498), who are said to surpass men in excellence (*aretē*) as well as in honour and might—although indeed the idea of the gods possessing the ordinary “manliness” is not out of harmony with other anthropomorphic notions.

By Plato and Aristotle *aretē* is used as the general term for what we understand by “virtue” = moral goodness, but even in Homer the transition is made. In the *Odyssey* (which in this as in other ways shows its later origin) Penelope, the faithful wife of Odysseus, is praised for her great *aretē* = courageous virtue—the fame of this *aretē* shall never perish (*Od.*, xxiv. 193, 197).

Most striking and exceedingly pathetic is the passage which we already know. “The half of his uprightness (*aretē* = manliness) doth far-seeing Zeus take from a man in the day that slavery cometh upon him.” Most striking and most pathetic, because the man who makes the assertion is himself a slave, the swineherd Eumæus.

(3) *Aidos*, a word which we have rendered reverence, is one of those terms which, whenever we attempt to translate them, lose their bloom. Any rendering of the Greek *aidos* by a single Latin, German, or English equivalent would be, by the side of the original, what a flower from the *hortus siccus* of the botanist is by the side of the sister-flower blooming on the mountain. So many-sided is it, moreover, that no one phrase in any other language could mirror it.

(a) We might perhaps begin to describe it as follows: If *aretē* is that which makes a man a “man” outwardly and in the opinion of others, *aidos* is that which makes a man a “man” to his own true inner self. Hence *aidos* is self-respect, that which makes a man turn away from what would lower him in his own eyes. Thus of the Achæans we read that, even after the Trojans forced them back upon the ships, there they remained, close in their ranks, and did not scatter, “for shame (*aidos*) and fear restrained them” (*Iliad*, xv. 657)—shame before themselves, that is, a fear of what others might say.

(b) Then again, by that curious intermingling which we have already observed in *aretē*,<sup>2</sup> *aidos* becomes this very sensitiveness to the opinion of others. *Aidos* is the spring and motive to which the Homeric leaders appeal in urging on the host. Again and again is the word thus used—by Agamemnon, Ajax, Telamon, Nestor, &c. “O friends, be men!” cries Ajax, “and lay up shame in your hearts; have shame of one another (fear of contempt) in

<sup>1</sup> Nitzsch (*Anm. zu Hom.*, Bd. i. p. 146) translates the sense of *aretē* as “that which is pleasing to men” (*den Menschen ein Wohlgefallen*). “Greek feeling,” he says, “united with beauty, wealth, ability, and every success, immediately the idea of the attention, the praise and the fame, which these things win from others.”

<sup>2</sup> See previous footnote.



the strong battles, for of those who are thus shamefast<sup>1</sup> more are saved than slain, but for those who flee there is neither glory nor safety" (*Iliad*, xv. 569). Here the expression is used no less than three times.

(c) But the *aidos* is shame in yet another sense. It is that shame which draws a veil over the deepest feelings of the heart. This is beautifully brought out in the scene at the first Phæacian banquet (*Od.*, viii. 86), when the divine minstrel sings the songs of famous men and of the hero then present, although unknown, amongst them. The inner chords are touched, and Odysseus, unable to overcome his emotion, draws his great cloak over his face, "for he was ashamed to shed tears beneath his brows before the Phæacians" (*Od.*, viii. 86).

(d) But, if the *aidos* has to do with the deepest feelings of a man's own heart, it also concerns itself in the most wonderful way with the secret feelings of others. Thus, in that remarkable passage where Agamemnon reproaches Diomedes and his comrade Sthenelus with being worse men than their fathers, and Sthenelus makes the indignant retort, "Lie not, Atreides!" already quoted (p. 264), Diomedes at first makes no answer, for, says the poet, "he revered the reproof of the king revered." But presently he looks askance at his outspoken comrade. "Brother," he says, "sit silent and obey my saying. I am not vexed at Agamemnon, shepherd of the host, in that he goadeth on the well-greaved Achæans to the fight. For on him will the glory attend if the Achæans lay low the Trojans and take sacred Ilios; on him also will be the great sorrow if the Achæans be laid low" (*Iliad*, iv. 411). Here a noble and impetuous youth, chafing under an insulting and undeserved rebuke, yet keeps silence out of reverent sympathy for the anxieties of the ruler.

(e) The next use of *aidos* is even more beautiful. When Achilles, to glut his vengeance for the slaying of Patroclus, shamefully treats the dead body of Hector, Apollo vehemently protests against this indignity to the assembled gods, and declares that Achilles "hath destroyed pity (crushed it out of his heart), neither hath he shame" (*Iliad*, xxiv. 44). And so, when Hecabe endeavours to dissuade old Priam from the journey to the ships of the Greeks, her argument is the dread of Achilles: "a savage, not-to-be-trusted man is this—he will not pity, neither reverence thy grey hairs at all" (*Iliad*, xxiv. 207). Priam, however, goes on his way in the darkness of the night. Arriving at Achilles' tent he enters, and straightway clasping (as a suppliant) the hero's knees he kisses his hands—those hands, "terrible, man-slaying, that had slaughtered" so many of Priam's sons—and then the old man begins with wondrous tact: "Bethink thee of thy father, Achilles, like to gods, that is of like years with me on the grievous pathway of old age!" And with like tact the appeal concludes: "Reverence the gods, Achilles, and pity me, even me, remembering thy father." The right chord is touched, the *aidos* comes back to Achilles; he breaks down, and conqueror and conquered mingle their tears together—the one for the father, the other for the son, whom he shall never see in life again.

(f) The next meaning of *aidos* has its origin in that strange transformation whereby *xenos* came to mean not "foe" but "guest." Hence the noble swineherd Eumæus says that of the labour of his hands he has eaten and drunken, and "given to those who are to be revered (*aidoioisin*)" (*Od.*, xv. 373). His auditor well knows who are meant—the stranger, the suppliant, the homeless wanderer; all these are from Zeus, sent by him to be "reverenced"—i.e. taken care of.

(g) Finally, passing over many other passages, we conclude with one which

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Lang's excellent rendering, shamefast, here = steadfast.

contrasts most marvellously the man possessed and the man devoid of *aidos*. The scene is supposed to be the games following the Phæacian banquet. Odysseus, still unknown, has been asked to take his turn in the various contests of skill and has declined, whereupon one of the young nobles, Euryalus by name, twits him as being more like to a man that hath charge of a cargo of eagerly-snatched-at gains than one that is an athlete, practised in manly sports. "Then Odysseus of many counsels looked sternly at him, and spake to him: 'Friend, not well (*kalon*) hast thou spoken. Thou art like to a man presumptuous. Thus the gods give not to all men every grace—stature and wisdom and power in speech. For one man is feeblér than another in form, but God crowneth his words with beauty, and men look upon him and rejoice; he speaketh with certainty and sweet modesty, and is distinguished in the assembly, and when he cometh into the city men gaze upon him as on a god. Another, again, in beauty is like to the immortals, but to his words there lacketh the crown of grace. Even so, thy form indeed is wondrous stately—nor could God Himself fashion it better—but in mind thou art empty!'" (*Od.*, viii. 165 *et seq.*).

Thus the *aidos*, gathering up into one so many tender and beautiful traits—reverence towards the gods, reverence towards the higher self, reverence for the ruler in anxiety, for the aged, for the weak, the stranger, the suppliant—is, above and beyond all these, that "sweet modesty" which is the *Charis*, the crowning grace of the whole.

Truly, if any proof were needed of the truth of the statement that "Man was made in the image of God," such proof is before our eyes in the *aidos*. Such a word, expressive of the truest refinement, we might have expected to find indeed among a people like the Hellenes, but only at their prime. We might have looked for it, perhaps not unreasonably, in Sophocles or Plato. But here it stands in the earliest dawn of history—before the conception or even the word "history" had been formed—placed there by the Great Teacher, by Him who has educated the nations to soften and civilise by its gentle influence until the great Exemplar Himself should come.

## V.—SIN

Such, then, were the ideals of the Homeric man. He is no hero, in the eyes either of his fellows or of the gods, who does not rise to the claims of justice, manliness, reverence. Do, then, the heroes ever fall short of these claims? And if so, are they conscious of a fall?

Some writers would have us believe that no thoughts of shortcoming ever troubled the mind of the Homeric age. Their idea of Homeric life seems to be borrowed from the description of the festivities in the halls of the hospitable Alcinous; and their conception of the aims of the heroes is summed up in the words in which Odysseus on one of these occasions compliments his host. He says that to his mind the fairest of sights is when all the people hold festival, and sit in the halls, listening to the singer, whilst the tables are laden with good cheer, and the wine-cup goes merrily round (*Od.*, ix. 5 *et seq.*). But the gist of the passage is that this scene is delightful to Odysseus from its rarity. He calls it a *telos*, that is, a consummation, issue, or result of something that has gone before—like his own hard experience.

The real life of the heroes, as depicted by Homer, is an earnest one. The only careless, light-hearted individual in the *Iliad* is Paris, the contemptible; the only persons in the *Odyssey* that perpetually feast and make merry are the



lordly wooers, who are doing it at another man's cost, and thereby drawing down death and black fate upon their heads.

True, despite the fact that scenes of battle and death form the background of the *Iliad*, there is a joyous ring throughout, a buoyant tone which cannot be weighed down even by such associations. But this is neither the joy of frivolity nor the joyous ease of a summer-day. Rather is it the joy of the spring-time. As a later Homer might have said of the age: "Even as the sap runneth up into the boughs of a tree, causing them to bring forth leafage and blossoms and fruit, so did their great might energeise in the hearts of the Achæans." The fresh bright tone of Homer is the brightness of energy and hope—the energy and hope of a great nation in its youth. But we shall do a grievous wrong to the old master if we imagine for a moment that he takes any but the most earnest view of life and its obligations, as they unfold themselves to his eyes.

To the question then, Were Homer's men and women conscious of what we call "shortcoming" and "sin"? we reply, Certainly they were; Homer depicted real men and women, not creatures of imagination; and it is writ large upon his pages that sin was not only a source of grief to them but a great puzzle. The Homeric hero, like Telemachus, knows perfectly well right from wrong; he has a noble nature; he means to do the right, but somehow or other he fails and does—the wrong.<sup>1</sup> We may learn this indeed from the language itself. Let us look at some half-dozen words used by Homer to denote sin. They are—

- (a) *atē*, blindness of heart;
- (b) *atasthalia*, darkening of the mind;
- (c) *hamartano*, to miss the mark, fail;
- (d) *alitaino*, to err, wander in mind;
- (e) *hyperbasia*, a transgression (overstepping).

Here, again, we note the curious blending of the moral and intellectual perceptions peculiar to the Greek. The Homeric man does the right, because he knows it (p. 267); and he now does the wrong, because he has "become blind," "darkness has overtaken" him, he has aimed and "missed the mark," he has "wandered," and "overstepped" the bounds of the great unwritten laws.

Very pathetic are these secrets of language. The Homeric man, like ourselves, knew something of the moral conflict.

(f) Another very important word for sin must also be noticed here—*hybris*. Its etymology is not clear;<sup>2</sup> but its general meaning is "fulness of sin," sin showing itself in sheer wantonness and unbridled insolence.

One or two instances of the way in which these words are used must now be briefly glanced at. Unless we understand this side of the Greek character, we shall fail to understand the whole.

(a) *Atē*. The origin of evil is a terrible mystery to the Greek, and so he calls it *atē*, "blindness." *Atē* has come upon him, and darkened the knowledge of right and wrong which he perceived in his heart. A man who sins is, in fact, infatuated, so blind that he cannot see whither he is going, the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. St. Paul: "The good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do" (Rom. vii. 19).

<sup>2</sup> Curtius connects *hybris* with *hyper*=over and above; but this derivation presents difficulties. Some writers (Gesenius and others) see in it a Semitic word; but Aug. Müller (Bezenberger's *Beiträge*, pp. 273–301, 1877) rightly points out that this is exceedingly improbable, inasmuch as the Greeks never borrowed an abstract term. The Semitic loan-words in Greek are names for importations, foreign articles, or animals, and the like.

consequences of his acts. So extraordinary does this appear to the Homeric man that he attributes it, like the breaking of the oaths, to the action of the gods. This, at least, is put forward as an excuse. Atē, personified, is the eldest daughter of Zeus; she blinds every one, her own father not excepted. When Zeus wakes up on one occasion to the consequences of her blinding—the taking of a rash oath—he seizes her by her bright locks, and whirls her out of Olympus. Atē alights among men, walks over their heads, because she is tender-footed—and therefore, as Plato hints, she likes softness—and men she has gone on blinding and deceiving ever since (*Iliad*, xix. 85 *et seq.*).

Such is the myth about Atē. But does the sensible Homeric hero in his heart of hearts believe that he has been compelled to do wrong? Not at all. Agamemnon has sinned in that he has wronged Achilles; and when the reconciliation between the two takes place, for very shame before the man he has wronged Agamemnon dissembles, and throws the blame on the gods. Zeus and Fate and Erinyes, that walketh in darkness, were the cause of his sin, he says; and then he relates the Atē-myth, and asks how he, poor innocent man, could help himself, when even Zeus had been deceived?

Agamemnon forgets that he is speaking to the man to whom deceit is "hateful as the gates of hell." Achilles' reply is significant enough: "'Tis not meet to waste time here in subtilties" (*Iliad*, xix. 149); and he, doubtless, bethinks him of the day when he himself had predicted that Agamemnon should sooner or later confess his own atē, his own blindness.

That Agamemnon does know it, and only puts forward the Atē-myth as a pretext, is evident from another passage. Agamemnon in private and Agamemnon in public are two different characters. In private, amid his friends, when the host is laid low, the Trojans are triumphing, and his own heart is consequently smitten by sore grief, the king of men speaks the truth. Old Nestor has just told him plainly that he had done wrong in yielding to his proud spirit, and dishonouring one whom even the immortals honoured. Agamemnon replies<sup>1</sup> (*Iliad*, ix. 115): "Old sir, in no way falsely hast thou accused my follies (*atas*). I was infatuated, nor do I myself deny it. Worth many hosts indeed is the man whom Zeus loveth in his heart, even as he hath now avenged him, and subdued the Achæans. But, seeing I have sinned in obeying my wretched passion, I am willing in return to make amends, and give a boundless atonement."

Here there is no personified atē; Agamemnon speaks plainly of his own *atas* = blindnesses or follies, and traces these to the obeying of his own "wretched passion." Is there not a perception here of the fact that man is tempted when he is "drawn aside of his own lust and enticed"?<sup>2</sup>

Before leaving atē, we may note that, in a secondary sense, atē becomes the punishment of sin as well as sin itself. Thus, grievous ruin (literally, a strong, close-pressing atē, a darkness like that caused by a dense cloud) falls upon a man who has slain another, and is obliged to flee from the avengers of blood to a land of strangers (*Iliad*, xxiv. 480). And Agamemnon on two occasions refers to the disasters that have come upon the host as an atē. He says that Zeus has bound him with a grievous atē. And again, "Father Zeus!" he

<sup>1</sup> The public avowal of Agamemnon is made in the Nineteenth, the private in the Ninth, Book of the *Iliad*. If the Ninth Book is one of the latest additions to the *Iliad*, as some critics hold, then it might be urged that the personified (the concrete) Atē is the earlier idea, the abstract atē (a man's own passions) the later. Against this, however, we must set the fact that in the First Book, belonging to the oldest part of the *Iliad*, Achilles speaks of Agamemnon's own atē (see above). Moreover, it is quite evident from the Nineteenth Book, also belonging to the oldest part, that Achilles sees through Agamemnon's "subtilties."

<sup>2</sup> St. James i. 14.



cries with tears, "didst thou ever blind with such a blindness (*atē*) any mighty king, and rob him of his glory?" (*Iliad*, ii. 111; viii. 236). The blindness and the punishment are inextricably bound together.

(b) **Atasthalia** is probably connected with *atē*; it is always used in the plural by Homer, and represents the out-growths of the fatal blindness, showing themselves in disregard of warnings, big words (boasting), and presumptuous deeds. One of the passages in which it occurs is, for this part of our subject, perhaps the most important in Homer. It occurs in the *Odyssey* (*Od.*, i. 32 *et seq.*).

"Ah me!" says Zeus, "how vainly do mortals blame the gods! for from us, they say, comes evil; whereas they, even themselves, by their own blind follies, have woes beyond what is ordained."

Here the view of sin, as the outcome of passion, which Agamemnon took when sore afflicted, is emphasised and made authoritative, as it were, by being put into the mouth of Zeus. The particular sin alluded to is that of *Ægisthus*, who has wooed the wife of Agamemnon in his absence, and slain her lord on his return, and this *Ægisthus* has done with sheer ruin before his eyes; for *Hermes*, the keen-sighted messenger of Zeus (here personifying conscience), had been sent to warn him against both sins, telling him that Agamemnon would be avenged by *Orestes*, his son, so soon as the latter had arrived at man's estate. *Ægisthus* takes his own way. "And now," says Zeus, "hath he paid for all at once." (*Orestes* has slain him.) Then made answer the goddess, bright-eyed *Athena*, "O our Father *Kronides*, ruling on high, that man lieth in ruin well deserved. So perish all likewise who work such deeds!"

This passage marks a wonderful advance on the Zeus who could command, and the *Athena* who could carry out the command, that a Trojan should be tempted to break the oaths. Henceforth, no Greek who borrowed his morality from Homer could really believe that the poet excused sin on the ground of compulsion by the gods. Nevertheless, the two passages remained to be a source of perplexity to coming generations. It is noteworthy, moreover, that, even in the *Odyssey*, *Aphrodite* is still blamed for sending on *Helen* the blindness (*atē*) which induced her to leave her home (*Od.*, iv. 261).

(c) **Hamartano** is, perhaps, the most significant of all six terms, inasmuch as it signifies conscious effort on the part of the individual—effort to do right—and failure. The spearman has made his preparations, taken his aim, launched his javelin, and—missed the mark. It is this word which is used generally by late writers, and also in the New Testament, to denote "sin." In Homer it occurs mostly in connection with missing the mark in the throwing of the spear; then it is used of failure generally, in purpose or words. But, even in Homer, the transition to the moral realm is made. In one very touching passage, which we must give in full immediately, the "missing of the mark" denotes "sin" absolutely. The gods, it is said, may be reconciled even if a man have transgressed and "missed his mark" (*Iliad*, ix. 50).

(d) **Alitaino** answers to our "err," and is akin to *atē*, wandering distraction of mind. Its force is best seen in the passage where *Achilles* rejects *Agamemnon's* offer, and says: "Him I will join neither in counsel nor in work, for he hath utterly deceived me, and done wickedly (literally, gone astray). . . . Zeus, the counsellor, hath taken away his wits" (*Iliad*, ix. 374).

(e) **Hyperbasia** is transgression—an overstepping of the *themis*—and is specially used in connection with the rashness of young men and the sin against the oath. One very interesting and characteristic passage where it occurs is that which tells of a dispute between *Menelaus* and *Antilochus*, son of *Nestor*.

In the funeral games held in honour of Patroclus, Antilochus has carried off a prize, a mare, over the head of Menelaus, whom he had outstripped in the chariot race "by craft, not by swiftness." Menelaus indignantly calls upon Antilochus to come forward and swear "as is *themis*" that he had not willingly hindered the chariot of his competitor by guile. Antilochus, however, is no false swearer. "Then Antilochus, wise of heart, made answer (*Iliad*, xxiii. 586): 'Have patience, for I am much younger than thou, King Menelaus; thou art before me, and better than I. Thou knowest how the transgressions (*hyperbasie*) of a young man arise—his mind is hastier and his judgment weak. Let thine heart bear with me; I myself will give thee the mare which I have taken. And if there be any other thing better at home that thou desirest, forthwith would I willingly give it thee, rather than fall for ever from thy heart, O fosterling of Zeus, and become a sinner (wanderer = *alibros*) against the gods!'" And the son of great-hearted Nestor led forth the mare, and put it into the hands of the king. And the heart of Menelaus "was gladdened, as when the dew falleth upon the growing ears of corn,<sup>1</sup> what time the fields are bristling. Even so, Menelaus, was thy soul gladdened within thy heart." Menelaus is not to be outdone in generosity, and bids Antilochus keep the prize.

(f) *Hybris* is sin resulting from unrestrained passions, an outrage such as that committed by Agamemnon against Achilles. Athena promises the latter that the king shall give him thereafter threefold goodly gifts "on account of this outrage (*hybris*)" (*Iliad*, i. 213). And throughout the *Odyssey* the conduct of the wooers is often spoken of as *hybris*, associated also with *atasthalia*; they are filled with "blind *hybris*," with infatuated insolence (*Od.*, xvi. 86).

It is, however, in the hands of the tragic writers that *hybris* assumes its great importance as the embodiment of sin.

*What constitutes sin.*—It is tolerably clear from the foregoing that sin, to the Homeric man, lay not only in any breach of the great unwritten laws, or of those obligations towards the suppliant and the stranger which were directly connected with religion, but also in the yielding to passion or unbridled resentment, and so sinning against the *aidos*, the higher self, and also against "the gods." For any hint, however, of the hatefulness of sin as committed against a god of holiness, or of sin as grieving a loving father, we look in vain in Homer. Such conceptions are utterly incompatible with his ideas of deities, who, although they watch over justice, yet have all the frailties and the revengeful passions of men.

We need not be surprised at this, nor yet that, in an age when life was held cheap, the shedding of blood should be an offence which might be compounded for by payment. The duty of revenge lies upon the nearest relative, but "life for life" is not always exacted. Thus, in the description of the shield of Achilles, one scene depicts the settlement of a dispute between two men about the blood-price (*poenā*) of a man slain (*Iliad*, xviii. 498).

Nevertheless, the instinctive horror of murder would seem to be implied in the passage already quoted (p. 288), which says that, when a man has slain another and fled to a strange land, there comes upon him a grievous (close-pressing) *atē*, so that men gaze at him in wonder. Is there here a reminiscence of the curse of Cain?

*Conscience.*—The words which end the tactful speech of Antilochus (above), "rather than become a sinner against the gods," imply the consciousness that an injustice committed against a fellow-man is also committed against that great Invisible Power which watched over justice. The word "conscience"

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Ps. 133: "As the dew of Hermon, so is unity amongst brethren."



does not occur in Homer, nor indeed even in the classical period; but if the word is not yet born, this argument of Antilochus clearly shows perception of the thing—con-science, *syn-eidesis*, a double knowledge, knowledge with the Unseen Power.

An example even more striking than this is to be found in the words of the god-like Eumæus, the noble thrall of the *Odyssey*. The disguised Odysseus has just assured the swineherd that his master is not dead, but on his way home. Eumæus, however, has been so often deceived by strangers and wayfarers that he will give no credence to the tale. Odysseus then says that if his words come not true the swineherd shall cast him down from a great rock, that other beggars may beware of deceiving. "A nice thing, indeed," says the swineherd. "Stranger, truly this would get me great fame and praise amongst men, both now and ever after, if, after bringing thee into my hut and giving thee welcome, I should then slay thee and rob thee of dear life. With good heart thereafter would I pray to Zeus Kronion" (*Od.*, xiv. 401).

Have we not here clearly the feeling of the Psalmist: "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me"?

Remorse and the pangs of conscience are personified in Homer under the name of Erinyes, an avenging power who probably travelled with the Greeks from the old Aryan home. The visitation of Erinyes, however, is confined to certain sins, as, *e.g.*, the murder of relatives, perjury, dishonour shown to parents, or to the elder brother (as head of the clan). The mother especially has the power of calling down vengeance on her children. Thus the mother of Meleager, being angry on account of the death of her brothers, whom Meleager has slain, prays to the gods and beats upon the earth, calling on Hades and dread Persephone to give her son to death, "and," it is said, "Erinyes, that walketh in darkness, relentless of heart, heard her" (*Iliad*, ix. 571). Telemachus, again, tells the wooers that never will he urge his mother to marry and leave the house against her will, for in departing, he says, "she would call down upon me hateful Erinyes" (*Od.*, xiv. 401).

The whole subject of the Erinyes = Furies, and their transformation into Eumenides = "gracious goddesses," is full of interest; but it belongs properly to the mythological side of our subject.<sup>1</sup>

*Repentance and Expiation.*—If, then, the Homeric man was conscious of sin, and had the double knowledge that his sin was known to the Invisible Justice, had he any perception that sin requires expiation?

Yes, there is evidence on this head also, although it has been denied by some.

In the very First Book of the *Iliad* a pestilence falls upon the host in consequence of the sin of Agamemnon in dishonouring one who had come to him in the doubly-sacred character of suppliant and priest. The plague is not stayed until—

1. Public acknowledgment of the wrong done has been made by the embassy to Chryse;
2. A holy hecatomb has been offered;
3. The damsel Chryseis; the cause of the sin, has been restored to her father (*Iliad*, i. 8–52).

Whilst this is proceeding on behalf of Agamemnon, the latter bids the people purify themselves, which they do by offering along the shore sacrifices to Apollo, and also by washing with sea-water (*Iliad*, i. 33). This latter ceremony is important to note, for the same means of purification is used down to the latest times; washing with the water of the sea formed, in the Eleusinian

<sup>1</sup> See article "Erinyes" in *Hellas*.

Mysteries, part of the preparation for initiation. Here the salt with its healthful, preserving qualities is the type of moral purity and restoration. In like manner, fumigation by "sulphur that averteth pollution" is used by Odysseus as a means of purification after the slaughter of the wooers (*Od.*, xxii. 481). It may be urged, of course, that these are entirely external observances. Certainly, but so were many of the ceremonies of the Mosaic Law. Both had this in common, that they served as types.

Again, the two instances of sin previously noted are accompanied by the acknowledgment of wrong-doing and the desire to make amends. Agamemnon promises and gives a "boundless atonement," *i.e.* large presents, to Achilles; Antilochus restores the mare to Menelaus, and is willing to add yet more if necessary.

The most perfect example of what the Homeric Greeks understood by "repentance" is, however, to be found in the allegory of Atē and the Litē—Sin and Prayers of Penitence. It occurs in the Ninth Book of the *Iliad*. Achilles has just refused all the gifts and entreaties of Agamemnon—his heart is implacable—he has not yet glutted to the full his desire for revenge. Odysseus has exerted his eloquence in vain. Then the old knight Phœnix, the tutor of Achilles, bursting into tears, endeavours by every argument in his power to soften the hero. "Achilles," he says (*Iliad*, ix. 496–512), "tame thy great spirit. It besemeth thee not to have a pitiless heart. Yea, even the gods themselves can bend, although theirs is mightier fame and honour and power. For men may turn away their wrath by incense and humble vow and drink-offering and burnt-offering, in prayer, whensoever any transgresseth and doeth sin.<sup>1</sup> For Prayers of Penitence<sup>2</sup> are the daughters of great Zeus; limping, and wrinkled, and with eyes askance, they come with heedful care behind Sin.<sup>3</sup> But Sin is strong and swift of foot; wherefore she far outstrippeth them all, and is beforehand over the whole earth, deceiving men; but Prayers come behind and make healing. Now whosoever reverenceth the daughters of Zeus when they draw nigh, him they greatly help, and hearken to his supplication; but when any one rejecteth and stubbornly refuseth them, then they depart and pray to Zeus Kronion that Sin (Atē) may come upon such an one, that he may be entangled, and pay the price."

This beautiful allegory, to be fully understood, should be read with the context; but, even as it stands, it needs no comment. The Homeric Greek had at heart a clear perception of the fact that the "taming of the heart" formed part of the discipline of every wise and good man, and that it formed part, moreover, of the reverence due to the Invisible Power—that reverence which Socrates puts as the first of the great Unwritten Laws.

## THE FUTURE LIFE

We now pass on to another part of our subject, and we ask: Did the Homeric man trouble himself with any thoughts as to what became of those who had departed this life, or did he content himself with the belief that all ended with death?

It would be to think meanly indeed of the Homeric man, far more meanly than our investigation up to this point warrants, were we to imagine him as apathetic on the subject. True, we have been told over and over again by the poets that primitive man had no troubles. During the reign of the gods of Greece, according to Schiller, "no horrible skeleton appeared before the bed

<sup>1</sup> Literally, misseth the mark, faileth.

<sup>2</sup> The Litē.

<sup>3</sup> Atē.



of the dying—a genius gently lowered the torch of life,”<sup>1</sup>—that was all. Is this Homer’s view of death? Hardly.

The Homeric man will, indeed, face death manfully. Like Hector and Achilles, when convinced that his day of destiny has come, he will meet it with resignation; but his feeling towards death is something very different from that of the man who thinks of it merely as the “sinking of a torch.” The Homeric man knows full well that the torch does not go out.

How then does he regard the future life in which, transplanted, the torch goes on burning? Let us ask Achilles, “the man of Truth.” When Odysseus speaks with his shade in the Lower World, he tries to console the hero for his early death by the reflection that, even here, he bears sway among the dead. But the shade replies (*Od.*, xi. 488): “Speak not comfortably to me concerning death, noble Odysseus. I had rather on earth be hireling to another, even a needy man who had no great livelihood, than be king over all the dead that are departed.”

The man of “untamed spirit,” “the best of all the Achæans,” could not put his view of the case more strongly than by saying that if he could but come back to earth, he would consent to be a day-labourer. Even when on earth, he had likened his hatred of a lie to his hatred for the house of Hades. In fact, far from being regarded with indifference, death in Homer is viewed with abhorrence, and the reason is not far to seek.

(a) The Homeric hero, when not exposed to the necessities and dangers of war, lives a bright and cheerful life. He delights in the feast and the banquet, ennobled, as they are, by the art of the divinely-gifted singer. He enjoys these pleasures with fresh, unweakened zest, and in the strength of the healthiest of bodies. In the midst of all this comes death, and robs the man, not only of all his earthly possessions, but of something better far—HIMSELF, his own “I,” his *ego* (*Nägelsbach*).

The Greeks of the Homeric age believed in the immortality of the soul, nevertheless, it was a strange and shadowy immortality, for the real “man” himself had ceased to exist. To explain this, we must touch for a moment on the Homeric “psychology,” which is full of interest.

According to the beliefs indicated in Homer, man consists of three parts: (1) *Demas, soma*, the body. The *demas* is the living body; the *sōma* in Homer always the body from which life has departed, although in later writers the word is applied to the living body also. *Sōma* is conjectured to mean a covering (*G. Curtius*). (2) *Psychē*, the soul. In Homer, the *psychē* is the breath (*anima*, lit. the wind, from a root signifying to blow, *G. Curtius*). Hence, since the breath is the sign of life, *psychē* came to denote life itself in the sense of animal life. Later, it signified the soul. (3) *Phrēn, thymos*, the spirit or mind. The *phrēn* (generally used in the plural, *phrenes*), is, properly, the diaphragm, “the muscle that separates the heart and lungs from the lower organs.” Within the *phrenes* the Greeks placed not only all such feelings as we now connect with the heart, love, hatred, grief, anger; but also the faculties now attached with the brain, intelligence, thinking-power, memory, will. This has been explained by assuming that, whilst men in early ages had no practical experience of the effects of what we call “hard thinking” on head and brain, they were yet very sensible of that excitement of mind which affects the breast by quickening the

<sup>1</sup> “Damals trat kein grässliches Gerippe  
Vor das Bett des Sterbenden. Ein Kuss  
Nahm das letzte Leben von der Lippe,  
Seine Fackel senkt’ ein Genius.”

heart-beat and the pulse-throb. Hence they placed all mental faculties in the region of the heart (*Grote Meyer*), later using the word *phrenes* in this sense as we do "heart," without attaching any physical meaning to it.

The *thymos* is to be regarded as a term identical in meaning with *phrenes*, since both words are used indifferently to express the mental faculties, the passions, and affections. It is allied to the Sanskrit *dhū*, to move swiftly, shake, fan into a flame. Its primary significance is that of violent movement (*G. Curtius*); hence it may have denoted originally the blood boiling and coursing through the veins (*Autenrieth*), developing later into passion, spirit, the storm-tossed soul.

If the reader has weighed well these three sets of terms—

*sōma* = the covering body,

*psyche* = the breath of animal life,

*phrenes* or *thymos* = the seat of mental and spiritual life,

he will see that the last is incomparably the most important of the three, for it included all the nobler faculties—mind, will, intelligence, affections, and memory. Now, what was it that the Greeks imagined as taking place at the hour of death? Let a Shade explain: When a body has been committed to the funeral pyre, says the Mother of Odysseus (*Od.*, i. 221), "the sinews no longer hold together flesh and bones, but these the strong might of flaming fire subdues, and then the spirit (*thymos*) leaves the white bones, and the soul (*psyche*) flies forth like a dream, and hovers near." The *psyche* descends to Hades, but the *thymos* (or *phrenes*), the real *ego*, is lost.

The *psyche*, which is preserved, is something real; it is the principle of animal life, and in Hades it is united to the shadow-form (*eidōlon*) of the body from which it has escaped, and this *eidōlon* corresponds exactly to the man as he had been on earth, in appearance, dress, and voice. But it wants the noblest part of the man—the *phrenes*. Thus, when the shade of Patroclus appears to Achilles, urging him to bury his remains, for until this is done he cannot pass across the River, Achilles says, after the spirit has disappeared: "O wonder! even in the house of Hades there remaineth soul (*psyche*) and form (*eidōlon*), but the spirit (*phrenes*) is in no wise therein, for all through the night hath the shade of hapless Patroclus stood over me, wailing and making moan . . . and it was wondrous like to his living self" (*Iliad*, xxiii. 103 *et seq.*). Thus the souls in Hades wear, indeed, the semblance of their former selves, but have no more power of either physical enjoyment or suffering than a shadow may be expected to have. Only by tasting blood—"for the blood is the life"—do they recover for a time full possession of memory and consciousness, although some degree of both they seem to have always, for many of the spirits invoked by Odysseus in the *Nekyia* recognise the hero before they have tasted the blood, of which all are eager to drink. Such is the miserable existence to which Achilles refers when he says that he would rather be a hired labourer toiling for a needy master on earth than monarch of all the Shades.

Now we are in a position to understand the full force of the statement from which we set out, viz. that the Greeks of the Homeric age viewed death with abhorrence, for death to every man and woman was supposed to mean the loss of his or her real self. So strongly was this felt, that in one passage the body from which life has departed is said to be the man himself. In the opening lines of the *Iliad* (i. 3-5), e.g. we are told that by the quarrel of Achilles and Agamemnon many strong souls (*psychas*) of heroes were sent to Hades, and themselves (*autous*), i.e. their bodies, left to be a prey to dogs and all winged fowl on the battlefield. The only soul in Homer who retains the *phrenes* is that



of Teiresias, the blind Theban seer: "Him Persephone allowed to keep his understanding even in death—all the rest are but fluttering shadows" (*Od.*, x. 494).

(b) *Development of the Homeric Idea.*—It is evident that the foregoing represents a state of belief which could not last. The Greeks were, beyond all else, an inquiring, thinking people, and two questions naturally forced themselves to the front:—

(1) What became of the *phrenes* or *thymos*? Surely the nobler part of man, and all that made him "man" instead of brute, could not be lost, or destroyed in the flame of the funeral pyre? Thus we find, even in Homer, the growth of the idea that the *eidōlon* must possess the *phrenes* also, since "without the *phrenes* there is no spirit, no feeling, no thinking, no will." The evidence for this advance is contained in the concluding verses of the *Nekyia*. It is clear that if the Shades have no real body, they can feel neither pleasure nor pain. Hence the scenes which represent Orion hunting on the asphodel meadows, as he had been wont to do on earth, Tityus devoured by the vultures, Sisyphus covered with perspiration and dust, Tantalus grasping at the retreating fruit, must be considered as interpolations of later date.

(2) The second question, as to the fate of good and bad. Could it be possible that both would be treated alike in the world to come? Man's natural sense of justice revolted against such a supposition.

If the "horrible skeleton" hovering before the dying man be the fear of punishment after death, for sins committed during life, then, *pace* Schiller, this fear is to be found even in the *Iliad*. In the Third Book (278), on the occasion of the taking of the oath, Agamemnon invokes as witnesses, together with Father Zeus and Helios the Sun, those divinities also who "beneath the earth, punish men whose toil is ended (the dead) whosoever sweareth falsely." The same idea is also represented in the later sections of the *Odyssey*, referred to above, where Minos sits in Hades as judge to give to each man his doom.

The punishments of the notable offenders were probably depicted in the original legends as having been inflicted on earth. Later, the sufferers (like Prometheus) were transferred to the Lower World (*Stoll; Nügelbach*).

## VI.—THE ETHICAL UNITY OF THE HOMERIC POEMS

Now that we have analysed, as far as is possible in brief space, the thoughts, feelings, and aims of the Homeric age, we shall best sum up all by looking for a few moments at each of the two great poems as a whole. In doing this we must premise two things:—

(1) We must of necessity speak of a personal Homer, of a great Individuality, who had so stamped his own mind on what he brought into being that it was absolutely impossible for those who came later to do aught else than follow his lead, work out his plan and fill in gaps (so far as their daring led them to attempt this) in accordance with the spirit of the first grand sketch. The *Iliad* bears throughout the impress of one mind; it shows the unity of a great plan. The personal Homer is the architect of the *Iliad*, how many builders soever may have collaborated in, or worked in later days at, the completion of four-and-twenty books. This, we imagine, will be allowed by all fair and just thinkers.

(2) We must bear in mind that the poet is, from first to last, the great teacher among the Greeks. When he sings, it is because, like the blind Demodocus, he is "stirred by the god" (*Od.*, viii. 499). The true singer, like Phemius, is taught by no one but himself and God (*Od.*, xxii. 347); he has his

inspiration directly from the fount of inspiration. Hence, "from all men upon earth, singers have their share of honour and reverence (*aidos*), inasmuch as the Muse teacheth them the paths of song, and loveth the tribe of singers" (*Od.*, viii. 479). To imagine, therefore, that a poet of the very highest rank—the poet of all poets—the man who has given us pictures of human life and delineated for us human characters which, notwithstanding the lapse of nearly three thousand years, are universally felt at the present day to be real and human—to imagine that such an one had no higher aim than merely to tickle the ear of his generation, surely this were a great mistake. For those who have eyes to see, Homer was for all antiquity a great teacher of righteousness. He beautifies his teaching, indeed, by the melody of his song, but it is the teaching that ennobles the melody. He did not forget that the singer singeth before gods as well as before men (*Od.*, xxii. 346). Among the Greeks, says Bergk, "the memory of the fate and deeds of men lives in the song; and the poet, as it were, holds the office towards posterity of impartial JUDGE" (i. 479).

**I. The Invisible Justice the Ethical "Motive" of the "Iliad."**—We ask, then, what was Homer's aim—the object and purpose of the epos? He tells us himself in two passages:—

(a) In the opening of the poem: "Sing, goddess," he says, "the wrath of Achilles, Peleus' son, the ruinous wrath, that brought woes innumerable on the Achæans, and sent down to Hades many strong souls of heroes, and gave their bodies to dogs and all birds of prey—and so the counsel of Zeus wrought out its fulfilment."

(b) What was this counsel of Zeus? Let Helen reply: "Trouble has fallen on Troy," she says, "for the sake of me that am a dog, and for the sin<sup>1</sup> of Alexander (Paris), on whom Zeus bringeth evil doom, that even hereafter we may be a song in the ears of men that are yet for to come."

This, then, is the object of the *Iliad*—to sing of the counsel or purpose of Zeus, the doom that fell upon Troy in consequence of the *aitē* of Paris; his trampling on the foundations of the social order, on the great unwritten law of justice between man and man, between guest and host, between nation and nation.

(1) *The Counsel or Purpose of Zeus.*—As moral ruler of the world, Zeus is bound to punish the Trojans for the perfidy and breach of hospitality committed by Paris against Menelaus. The fact that Paris is the son of a king, "beloved of Zeus," makes the punishment all the more necessary, if judgment is not to be perverted at the fountain-head. Now, although it was reserved for Æschylus to work out fully this, the ethical motive-spring of the Trojan war,<sup>2</sup> yet, as a principle of action, it is everywhere implied in the *Iliad*. To take a few instances out of many. When Diomed bursts in impetuously upon Agamemnon's faint-hearted proposal to return to Argos, and dares the king and as many as are like-minded, to flee, he adds: "As for me and Sthenelus, we two will fight even until we win the goal of Troy, *for with God are we come*"—i.e. at God's command, and all the sons of the Achæians applaud the saying, as giving voice to their own convictions (*Iliad*, ix. 48). Menelaus appeals to Zeus to avenge him on Paris, so that, in time to come, many a foe may shudder to wrong his host who hath shown him kindness (*Ibid.*, iii. 350-354). Agamemnon himself recalls the promise made to him by Zeus, and confirmed by his nod, that he the king should not return till he had laid waste well-walled Iliion (*Ibid.*, ii. 112). Odysseus reminds the host that the portent seen in Aulis, and indicating the ten years' duration of the war, was from Zeus himself, Zeus

<sup>1</sup> *Aitē*.

<sup>2</sup> In the *Agamemnon*.



the counsellor (*Ibid.*, ii. 324); and old Nestor adds: "yea, and this I say, that most mighty Kronion pledged us his word on that day when the Argives embarked on their swift-sailing ships, bearing to the Trojans death and fate (*phonon kai kêra*)" (*Ibid.*, ii. 350 *seq.*). Whatever meaning commentators may read into these passages, they bear this, at all events, on their surface—that the Achaians believed themselves sent on a most righteous mission. They believed further that he who sent them was Zeus; and, finally, that *they*, as instruments of Zeus, bore with them to the Trojans Death and Fate—extermination.

In regard to the minor and later notices assigned as causes of the anger of the gods, viz., the deceitful conduct of Laomedon, ancient king of Ilios, towards Poseidon and Apollo, and the choice of Paris, it is sufficient to note here that a moral cause is at work in both cases. In the first instance, it is fraud (*Iliad*, xxi. 441 *et seq.*); in the second, by his award, Paris deliberately gives the palm to sensuality (personified in Aphrodite) over pure and lawful love (Hera) and wisdom (Athena) (*Ibid.*, xxiv. 25 *et seq.*). These two causes are, therefore, in harmony with the main necessity for the fall of Troy. The Trojan race, as fraudulent, deceitful, and sensual, must be extirpated from off the face of the earth, and the Greeks are the agents employed by Zeus to effect their destruction.

(2) *The Argument of the "Iliad."*—Turning now from the inner secret of the *Iliad*—the counsel of Zeus—to that which is visible on its surface—the means whereby that counsel wrought out its fulfilment, viz., the wrath of Achilles—we find everywhere the same living judicial Power represented as at work.

From the standpoint of the Homeric age, punishment is due to the Greeks in a measure no less than to the Trojans. Achilles has been injured by Agamemnon, and the Achaians have permitted the injury. The king of men has abused his position as chief of the League. He has snatched from Achilles—the friend who has stood by him and his brother, and borne the brunt of every contest—the "meed of honour" awarded to the stormer of cities by the great-hearted Achaians—Briseis of the fair cheeks. Achilles resents the affront and the slight thus openly put upon him, and appeals to Zeus to avenge his honour.

Such is, briefly, the "argument" of the *Iliad*, the incident round which the web of the narrative is woven. With the state of society which it discloses we have nothing to do here. The Achaians were doubtless pirates, marauders, and freebooters, as well as heroes—in fact, the latter name embraced the former.<sup>1</sup> As in the days of the Judges of Israel, they that had sped and won divided also the prey.<sup>2</sup> What concerns us here is that amongst those who thus divided the prey there was a sense of honour that, according to the notions of himself and his nation, Achilles had sustained a grievous wrong; that he is represented by Homer as calling upon Zeus to redress the wrong, and that the wrong is finally redressed by the direct intervention of Zeus, and not by Fate, Destiny, or any blind power whatsoever. Agamemnon has acted in the spirit of a proud and insolent tyrant; the Achaians have permitted him to do so; and, therefore, both he and they must suffer until they can stoop to feel the need of the man whom they have wronged. It is Zeus who promises this, and ratifies his promise by bowing his head thereto. "No word of mine is revocable, or false, or without fulfilment, when I have pledged it by the bowing of my head! Kronion spake, and nodded his dark brow, and the ambrosial locks waved from the king's immortal head, and he made great Olympus quake" (*Iliad*, i. 526–530).

This promise to Thetis Zeus himself refers to again (*Iliad*, xv. 72–77), and the havoc which it involves is expressly called "the decree of God," "the doom of heaven" (*thesphaton*) (*Iliad*, viii. 477)—a phrase which, let us note in passing,

<sup>1</sup> *Herōs* = a fighting-man; root *Fēr* (Paley).

<sup>2</sup> Judges v. 30.

as Welcker justly points out, is entirely incompatible with the idea of a supreme Fate" (*Ibid.*, i. 188).

(3) *The full Counsel of Zeus*.—The whole twenty-four books of the *Iliad* are, in fact, occupied in showing how Zeus kept his promise to avenge Achilles, and further, in exhibiting another part of the secret counsel of Zeus, also wrought out by the same means. For the counsel of Zeus, as conceived by the poet, is deep and wise, and involves many elements, and nowhere does the genius of Homer shine more transcendently than in the working out of his conception. An ordinary mind would have been satisfied with representing Zeus as executing judgment on the Trojan race as a whole. Indiscriminate slaughter and the vengeance of heaven sweeping all before it like a flood are ideas strictly in harmony with the age of the *Iliad*. But here Homer proves himself a poet for all time. From the standpoint, not of the Homeric age, but of the poet's own intuitive moral sense, Zeus is bound, in fulfilling his counsel, in upholding the moral order of the universe, to show his appreciation of moral worth. Hence, the humiliation of Agamemnon gives the opportunity for the recognition of Hector, and in his use of this opportunity Homer stands beside Shakespeare—the *Iliad* beside "King Lear"—a Hector beside an Edgar and a Cordelia.

We are expressly told that Hector was "a man beloved" of Zeus (*Iliad*, xxii. 168), dearest to the gods (and to Zeus specially) of all the mortals in Ilion (*Iliad*, xxiv. 66); and it is several times repeated that Zeus intended to honour him: "For he resolved in his heart to give glory to Hector, son of Priam" (*Iliad*, xv. 596).

Since the above lines were penned the writer has met with the following remark of Goethe's, which would seem indirectly to bear out the idea here set forth. "We talked about the *Iliad*," says Eckermann, "and Goethe called my attention to the following beautiful *motiv*, viz., that Achilles is put into a state of inaction for some time, that the other characters may appear and develop themselves" (*Conversations with Goethe*, transl. by Oxenford, v. ii. p. 237).

This, the *double element* in the counsel of Zeus, the true Homeric idea, explains, when rightly grasped, many of the apparent contradictions and inconsistencies of the *Iliad*, the alternations of victory between the Achaians and the Trojans, success seeming to attend now one, now the other. Even a cursory reading of the poem shows that these all depend on the counsel of Zeus. Achilles is to be honoured, but not until Hector has also had his day of glory. Until Hector has fired the ships, until Patroclus has met his death, until, in short, *the day fixed by the counsel of Zeus* had arrived, hope must rise and fall in the breasts of Achaians and Trojans alike. "Before that hour I cease not from my wrath" (*Iliad*, xv. 72).

In fact, the perplexities and sufferings of the Achaian leaders only serve as a foil to the noblest character conceived by antiquity. In the silent contrast drawn between the selfish high-handedness of Agamemnon and the equally selfish petulance of Achilles on the one hand, and on the other the generous self-sacrifice of Hector, lies the ethical worth of the poem. The Trojans must perish, as a race, for their fraud, meanness, and sensuality; and the Achaians, as a race, must be exalted; but to individuals in both cases the just reward of their actions is meted out.

The Invisible Justice working out these three great ideas—the doom of Troy, the avenging of Achilles, and the recognition of Hector—forms the inner motive-power which has held together the framework of the *Iliad* for nearly three thousand years, and will carry it on to the end of time.

**II. The Invisible Justice in the lives of Individuals.**—It is, however, when we turn to the delicate and intimate problem of the solitary human life



that the insight of the Master is most perceptible. Justice on a grand scale is obvious even in primitive ages when it takes the shape of Retribution, the avenging *opis* of the divine power. But to exhibit justice pulsating in the human life, bringing to fruition the seed sown by the individual himself, this is a task so difficult that we are always inclined to assign its beginnings to a much later stage of human thought. Such discernment, such power of analysis, we say, is the task, not of a Homer, but of a Sophocles.

Nay; Sophocles did but follow in the steps of Homer. Here in this age of "unconscious" morality we find traced with no indistinct outline, by no wavering hand, the doctrine that a man's "fate," a woman's "fate," is worked out by himself, by herself.

Let us gather up several threads, which we have already seen in the process of spinning, and note their place in the web of Fate—the life, that is, of the individual.

1. *Helen*.—We begin with Helen, not only as the prime cause of the "Song," but because at first sight her "fate" appears to be nothing less than a tremendous miscarriage of justice. Why should Helen be represented in the *Odyssey* as living in the utmost peace and happiness, restored to her home in honour, herself serene, supremely lovely as the moon at its full, whilst thousands of innocent lives have been sacrificed and hundreds of homes wrecked, according to the story, on her account?

It is apparently a puzzle, and to understand the fate of Helen is indeed impossible, unless we look at it from the standpoint of Homer's own age. Two considerations will help us:—

(1) Helen belongs to Mythology as well as to human life. She is a daughter of Zeus—mortal indeed, but not occupying precisely the same position as other mortals.

(2) Helen is represented throughout as sinning passively, that is, her conduct is the fault of Aphrodite. In order to fulfil her promise of giving to Paris "the most beautiful woman in the world" to wife, the goddess sends upon Helen the blindness which causes her to leave her home.

So much, apparently, Homer had received from tradition. He could not depart from the accepted version—neither himself nor his age was ripe for that—but what a man of deep moral feeling could read into the traditional story of Helen, that Homer read into it. The Helen of the *Iliad* is a noble, earnest woman, who has been betrayed into taking the one false step, but whose whole life during the twenty years' sojourn in Troy is one long repentance. As has been well said, the Helen of Homer is the only instance in all heathen antiquity of a penitent of the Christian type. At the opening of the poem she is her own sole accuser; no one blames her. Her divine birth, her beauty, the dignity of her character, envelop her, as it were, with a nimbus that inspires pity and reverence wherever she goes. The Trojan elders speak with bated breath when she appears, as though in the presence of a goddess. Old Priam himself says openly: "Come hither, dear child! . . . I hold not thee to blame. Yea; I hold the gods to blame, who have stirred up against me this tearful war of the Achæans" (*Iliad*, iii. 164).

Yes; Helen suffers intensely. She cannot find words deep enough to express her sense of degradation, her utter loathing of herself and her life: "Would that bitter death had been my pleasure," she says to Priam (*Iliad*, iii. 173), "before I followed thy son hither, leaving my home and kinsfolk, my darling child, and the dear company of the friends of my girlhood! But this was not so, wherefore I pine with weeping." Again, to her task-mistress, Aphrodite herself, she says, "I have woes untold within my soul" (*Iliad*, iii. 412). Not

the least bitter drop in Helen's cup, moreover, is that she has deserted honest-hearted, generous Menelaus for such an one as Paris. From her very soul she despises her new lord. "Would I had been the wife of a better man!" she says, "of one who felt dishonour (*nemesis*) and the many reproaches of men. But as for him, neither is his heart now manful, nor will it ever be. Therefore, I ween, he will reap the fruits" (*Iliad*, vi. 350). The fruits of the contempt and hatred of both sides Paris certainly reaps in abundance. Cowardly, turning pale at the sight of danger, self-pleasing, proud of his handsome person, striding down gaily from the citadel to the scene of blood, laughing while multitudes are perishing for his sake, Paris richly deserves, as Hector sternly tells him, "a robe of stone" (*Iliad*, iii. 57), i.e. to be stoned to death. The most irritating feature in his character is that which Helen has truly pointed out—his absolute indifference, the nonchalance with which he can vaunt to Hector that he, too, has gods on his side (*Iliad*, iii. 440), a boast which we shall do well to note, as it will meet us again from other lips. To be mated with such a man as Paris is of itself, for a woman like the Helen of Homer, punishment enough.

Finally, when despair has seized the Trojans, when Hector is no more, then Helen feels the horror of her position: "Hector, of all my brothers, the dearest to my soul!" she cries with tears. "Thee I bewail with aching heart and my wretched self with thee. None is left in wide Troy-land to be gentle or a friend to me, for all men shudder at me" (*Iliad*, xxiv. 773). So deep and true is Helen's repentance that the beautiful scene in the *Odyssey*, where she appears once more as the honoured and cherished wife of Menelaus, is the natural and fitting sequel to the horrors of the *Iliad*. It follows upon them as the peaceful sunset follows on a day of storm. Nevertheless, as we have seen, Zeus' daughter though she be, Helen reaps the fruits of what she has sown. Her short-lived *atē* is atoned for by twenty years of suffering.

2. *Agamemnon*.—The two-fold *atē* of Agamemnon in first disregarding the suppliant priest of Apollo, and then seizing upon Achilles' "meed of honour," has already been sufficiently examined. The invisible justice falls upon the king, not only in the disasters which overtake the host, but in the extreme humiliation which overtakes himself. He is compelled by sheer necessity and the public opinion of the army to supplicate with tears and gifts the help of the very man whom he has dishonoured; has to submit to be rejected, and finally has to see the total destruction of his army averted only by the might of Achilles. His own "meed of honour" as commander-in-chief is thus, as it were, openly taken from him in sight of all.

3. *Achilles*.—In delineating the character of Achilles, as in that of Helen, the poet seems to have had a traditional difficulty to contend with. Achilles is mortal; but, like Helen, he does not stand on the same level as other mortals, inasmuch as his mother is a goddess, silver-footed Thetis. Moreover, the "fate" of Achilles would seem to have been already traditionally fixed. The hero has a two-fold destiny offered him—he may either enjoy a long life in ignoble obscurity, or he may have a short and glorious career. These, together with, possibly, the outlines of the quarrel with Agamemnon, are the lines marked out by tradition for any one who should essay to sing the lay of Achilles.

Most poets would have contented themselves with the obvious course—the depiction of a character, generous, self-sacrificing, of altogether "heroic" mould. Homer does not overlook his opportunity, but he goes beyond it. He seizes it as a vehicle for the lesson pre-eminently required by his age. Not even the goddess born, the hero of mightiest force, shall be exempted



from the necessity laid upon all mortals, of "taming the high spirit" within.

His Achilles is, at first, the hero of heroes—ardently devoted to those whom he loves, in the very forefront of every danger, thoughtful and considerate for the welfare of the people. It is he, not Agamemnon, who calls together the assembly to inquire how the pestilence may be abated.

Such is Achilles when the story opens; but the little rift is already there within the lute. Achilles' pride is already dissatisfied with his position under Agamemnon; he is already allowing himself to chafe against the arrogance of the king. The quarrel between the two is only the final explosion of feelings long pent up—of jealousy on the one side, of wounded pride and resentment on the other. Achilles has now a "legitimate" grievance; he is robbed of his "meed of honour," and after soliciting and obtaining from Zeus the promise that he shall be avenged, he retires to his quarters, to hug his wrath, and brood in secret over his wrongs.

Here we see the *atē* overpowering Achilles, rising up like a thick mist (or like "smoke" as he himself puts it) out of the very factor that makes him noble, the intensity of his character. Out of the qualities which had rendered him a friend and lover supremely generous, he now develops the most passionate hatred. It is not enough that Agamemnon should be made to know his *atē*, in that he honoured not at all "the best of the Achæans" (so Achilles styles himself). He petitions Zeus also, that the host of the Achæans may be hemmed in among the ships by the sea, forced back by the Trojans, "and slaughtered, that they may all have joy of the king" (*Iliad*, i. 409). In the Sixteenth Book also, Achilles vents a fervent wish that not one of the Trojans, nor yet of the Achæans, might escape death, so that the honour of taking the citadel of Troy might belong to himself and his dearest comrade Patroclus alone.<sup>1</sup>

Thus Achilles sits in his hut, eating his heart out in his self-enforced idleness, a very "burden of the earth," as he afterwards calls himself. He sees the wounded borne past to the camp, he hears the groans of the dying—it is music to his ears. At length, in dire distress, Agamemnon's pride gives way, and he sends two of the noblest of his counsellors, Odysseus and Ajax Telamon, with the old knight Phoenix, Achilles' former tutor, to effect a reconciliation. Odysseus offers the atonement in the shape of a king's ransom; Achilles rejects it with scorn. Old Phoenix beseeches him by his own affection, by all home memories, by the gods, to relent. "The very gods themselves can be turned," he says, and begs Achilles with tears not to spurn the *Litæ*, the prayers of penitence, which have now followed in the wake of Agamemnon's *atē*. Achilles will not hearken. Ajax, finally, in a few soldierly words reminds him of the love of his comrades, who have ever honoured him beyond all others, and hints that even the meanest of them will accept an atonement from the shedder of blood. Achilles seems on the point of yielding, but no! Straightway the remembrance of Agamemnon's insolence rises up like smoke, as an *atē*, and darkens his soul, and he again becomes immovable. As Patroclus says to him on another occasion (*Iliad*, xvi. 33): "Pitiless that thou art! Not the knight Peleus, I ween, was thy father, nor Thetis, thy mother, but the grey sea bore thee and the craggy rocks, for cruel is thy heart."

All arguments fail—atoning gifts, home memories, reverence for the gods, love of comrades—all are alike ineffectual, and the embassy returns disheartened. Practical Diomedes, however, puts the matter in the right light:

<sup>1</sup> These verses (Book xvi. 97-100) are probably an interpolation, but they fully represent the mind of Achilles.

"Most glorious Atreides," he says, "Agamemnon, king of men, would thou hadst not made prayer to the noble son of Peleus, with offer of gifts innumerable. Haughty is he at any time, and thou hast now inspired him with yet more haughtiness. Nevertheless we will let him be, whether he go or stay. Hereafter he shall fight, when his heart within his breast commands and God rouses him" (*Iliad*, ix. 697).

Yea, when God rouses him. But how does God rouse him? By granting Achilles his heart's desire, and taking it from him at one and the same time. The fulfilment of the revenge by the invisible justice includes the punishment of Achilles.

The Achæans are reduced to the last extremity—Hector has fired the ships. Still Achilles will not yield. What is the general distress to him? Hector will take care not to come near his huts. In an agony of grief Patroclus beseeches Achilles at least to give him his armour and allow him to lead the Myrmidons against Hector, so that perchance he (Patroclus) may be taken for Achilles, and so ward off destruction from the ships. Achilles reluctantly consents that Patroclus shall go, but he has set eyes on his comrade for the last time. The gentle, kindly hero falls, and then Achilles awakes to the full consequences of his own miserable *atē*. His dearest friend, dear to him as Jonathan to David, is dead, and he was not there to ward off destruction for him. Achilles is essentially of a noble nature, and the thought that Patroclus need not have perished had he been in his right place, at the head of his Myrmidons, is the bitterest drop in the cup.

His mother, Thetis, comes to comfort him, and reminds him that Zeus has fulfilled his prayer—the Achæans are hemmed in at the ships for lack of his strong arm, and the host has suffered terrible things.

"My mother," says the hero with deep sighs, "these things indeed hath the Olympian fulfilled to me; but what pleasure have I therein since my dear comrade is undone—Patroclus, whom above all my comrades I honoured, even as mine own self? May I die forthwith, seeing that I might not come to the help of my comrade. He hath perished far from his native land, for lack of me to be his defender in the onslaught. Now, since I shall never go back to my dear native land"—here is Achilles' judgment upon himself—"nor have I brought deliverance either to Patroclus or my other comrades, so many, slain by noble Hector; but sit by the ships a useless burden of the earth—I, who am such an one in war as none other of the mail-clad Achæans, though in council others be better. May strife perish from among gods and men, yea, and anger, which embittereth even a wise man—anger, which, sweeter far than dropping honey, groweth in the hearts of men like smoke, even as but now Agamemnon, king of men, angered me. The past we will leave, how grievous soever it be, taming the heart within our breasts from necessity."

We would ask the reader to note Achilles' last word, "necessity," *anankē*. In later times *anankē* attained formidable proportions as a hard, grinding force, which no man might escape or outrun. Like the personified *Atē* of Agamemnon, it was a convenient excuse. But here Achilles puts it forward in no such light. He knows full well that old Phœnix' words have proved true—that he repulsed Zeus' daughters, the Prayers of Penitence; that blindness came upon him and he has paid the price, even his dearest friend slain while he sat nursing his *atē* by the ships.

4. *Hector*.—Surely, says the reader, the fate of Hector is in no way traceable to himself? Surely Hector falls because his fate is involved in the fate of Troy, of the doomed city? In one sense, Yes; in another, No. Hector's fate, like that of Helen, of Agamemnon, of Achilles, springs directly from his



own seed-sowing. Dear as Hector is to Homer, truth is dearer still. If Achilles, the goddess-born, the man more sinned against than sinning, must yet be shown in his true light as the man also of "untamed spirit," Hector may not be spared. Let us look into this.

Hector is, we imagine, Homer himself—that is, the old blind bard (to use the phrase of antiquity) has thrown into the character of Hector his notions of what he himself—had he been young, full of energy, and a leader of men—would have thought, said, and done under the particular circumstances.

Whether this be so or not, there can be no doubt that Hector, of all the heroes, comes up most fully to the threefold standard of justice, manliness, reverence.

Justice, as we know, means the fulfilling of the obligations imposed by the great unwritten law in every relation of life. Towards Zeus and the gods Hector's disposition throughout is what we should now call sincerely religious. He recognises, that is, a tie which binds him to the great Unseen Power, call it by what name we will. Rising above the superstition of his age (one omen is best—to fight for the fatherland), his faith in the Great Father is such as would put to shame that of many a so-called Christian.

To father and mother, Hector is the son of sons. No scenes in Homer are more affecting than those in which old Priam and Hecabe bewail his loss. Priam has many sons left besides Paris, but, in comparison to Hector, what are they? What are those whom he has already lost? "So many of my sons, in the bloom of their youth," he says, "hath Achilles slain; but, sore grief though it be, for none of them all do I mourn as I mourn for one, for whom my sharp grief will bring me down to the house of Hades, even Hector." Thus he spake, and with him sorrowed the townsfolk; whilst among the women Hecabe led the loud lament: "My child, how shall I live, wretched, in my misery, now that thou art dead, thou who wert my boast day and night through the city, and a strength to all throughout the town, both men and women of Troy, who revered thee as a god—for verily thou wert to them an exceeding great glory in thy life, but now have death and fate o'ertaken thee!" (*Iliad*, xxii. 423-426, 429-436).

As regards his wife—what has Hector not been to Andromache? "Hector, thou to me art father and lady mother; yea, and brother, thou who art my noble husband."

Towards evil Paris, the bringer of destruction on Troy, Hector's attitude throughout is that of the wise and kindly elder brother. Grieved to the heart by the cowardice of slothful, ease-taking Paris, he bears the shame for the man who can feel no shame, whilst striving by every means in his power, stern reproof or encouragement, to rouse him to a sense of his position.

So much for justice. Then for manliness—the attempt to describe the *aretē* of Hector would be to transcribe half the *Iliad*. As for the *aidos*, let Helen speak. It is Hector alone who has been her champion, soothing her with kind and gentle words when others have reproached her in his father's halls. When Hector dies, Helen's last friend is gone.

How, then, is Hector to blame for his fate? In the only way possible to such a character as his, Hector yields to that last weakness of noble souls—he thirsts for glory.

The same evening that Patroclus is slain, the Trojans are made aware that the death of his comrade is known to Achilles, and not likely to be unavenged, for the hero has shown himself at the trench, visible to all in a flaming cloud cast about him by Athena. They have heard also his mighty voice, and that of Athena, in a shout which has struck terror into the hearts of many. Poly-

damas, therefore, wisest of counsellors among the Trojans, advises that the host should withdraw under cover of night to the city. "Let us go up to the fortress," he says; "believe me, thus will it be. Now hath ambrosial night stayed Peleides, swift of foot; but if to-morrow he light upon us here, rushing full-armed upon us, well shall each one know that it is he. Gladly shall he reach sacred Ilion, whosoever fleeth, and many of the Trojans shall dogs and vultures devour" (*Iliad*, xviii. 266). Thus spake the man wise of heart, who excelled Hector in counsel, and "saw before and after."

Hector, however, indignantly rejects the counsel. Then Hector of the glancing helm looked sternly on him and said: "Polydamas, what thou sayest is in no way pleasing to me. . . . Now that the son of crooked-counselling Kronos (Zeus) hath given me to win glory by the ships and to press the Achæans to the sea, no longer, foolish man, utter such counsels among the people. No man of the Trojans will obey thee. I will not suffer it."

Here the *atē* of his desire for glory rises up in Hector as does the *atē* in Achilles, out of his own noblest qualities. "What though noble Achilles has arisen beside the ships?" he says. "I, at least, will not flee before him—much rather will I stand and face him, to try whether great might shall be to him, or haply to me." What Hector, the individual, might do, however, is not open to Hector, the shepherd of the host, to essay. We have seen what the standard of the ruler is in Homer (p. 272)—the sceptre is entrusted to him "to take counsel for the people." Hector has had the counsel offered him by one entitled to speak, and he rejects it.

Once before, indeed, Hector has rejected the counsel of Polydamas (p. 264), but then he does so in reliance on the counsel of Zeus. Then his aim was to fight for the fatherland—now it is to match himself against Achilles and to win glory.

Connecting this episode now with the events of the following day—the fatal defeat, the utter rout of the Trojans—we can form some idea of what is passing in noble Hector's mind as he stands at the Skæan Gate, watching the fugitives pouring into the city, pursued by death and fate. His thought is this—that he to whom both Trojans and allies trusted to give the word in war, whether to fight or to retreat, has betrayed his trust—he, the shepherd of the host, has undone the host.

"Ah me!" he says (*Iliad*, xxii. 99), "if I go within the gates and walls, Polydamas will be the first to load me with reproach, for he bade me lead up the Trojans to the fortress during this fatal night, when noble Achilles arose—but I hearkened not, though surely better far would it have been. And now that I have undone the host by my blind folly, I have shame to face the men of Troy, and the long-robed Trojan women, lest some worse man than myself should say, 'Hector, by trusting to his might, hath destroyed the host.'"

This thought it is—"I, by mine own blind folly, have undone the host"—that flashes across the mind of the shepherd of the host as he stands leaning against the tower. It is the agony of the thought that Hector is fleeing from—not the dread of Achilles—when the desperate race begins. Achilles approaches with his mighty spear and glittering god-made armour shining like the sun in his strength. Then the poet says trembling seized upon Hector and he "fled in fear." But let us not make any mistake. It is no bodily fear that besets Hector; he flees before Achilles, because Achilles appears as retribution, the avenging Nemesis of his own fatal *atē*. Both heroes are urged on by the *aidos*—both have failed in their duty as shepherds of the host. Hector flees from the *aidos* within; Achilles sees an opportunity of atoning for his



neglect and avenging the death of Patroclus—Hector sees no such opportunity ; he flees from the anguish of his own thoughts.

"Ah me!" says Zeus, "a man dearly beloved I see chased round the wall. My heart is woe for Hector!" But the woe did not save Hector. Then the father took his golden scales "and weighed therein the fates of Achilles and Hector, and the fate of Hector sank down even to the house of Hades." Hector's day of destiny has come. Apollo, his protector, leaves him, and Athena descends to lure the hero to his doom. In the form of his best-loved brother, Deiphobus, she urges him to make a stand. Full of gratitude to the supposed Deiphobus for imperilling his own safety by coming to be his second, Hector halts. Achilles launches his spear; it misses aim and is returned secretly to him by Athena. Now it is Hector's turn. "Not as I flee," he says to his enemy, "shalt thou plant thy spear in my back; nay, face to face, drive it through my breast, if God give thee to do it!" He hurls his spear; it rebounds from the shield of Achilles. He calls to Deiphobus to bring him another—no Deiphobus is there. Then Hector understands the matter—he has been deceived. "'Twas Athena played me false. . . . Now hath fate reached me," is his conclusion. "At least, let me not die without a struggle, ingloriously. Nay, but having accomplished a great deed, whereof in time to come men shall hear!" The fatal conflict ensues; weakened and exhausted, Hector is easily overcome—he falls—but on his tomb the gods themselves strew incense.

*The Invisible Justice in the "Odyssey."*—As in the *Iliad*, so in the *Odyssey*, the deeds of mortals are to be for a "song" in the ears of men. The poet, as before, holds the office of impartial judge for posterity.

The song of the *Odyssey* is the "great excellence (*aretē* = virtue) of blameless Penelope, who was well mindful of Odysseus, her wedded lord; wherefore the fame of her virtue shall never perish, but the immortals will fashion a gracious song for men on earth to the fame of the constant Penelope. As for the daughter of Tyndareus (Clytemnestra), who devised evil deeds and slew the husband of her youth, hateful shall the song of her be among men." So says the ghost of Agamemnon in the lower world.

The keynote is struck at the opening of the poem in the lament of Zeus already quoted (p. 289): "How vainly do mortals blame the gods! for from us, they say, comes evil, whereas they, even themselves, by their own blind folly, have woes beyond what is ordained." The *Iliad* shows justice at work among those engaged in the war; the *Odyssey* shows it descending on those who remained and devised evil deeds in the absence of the heroes, thus bringing woes on themselves by their own blind follies.

Great part of the poem is occupied with the wondrous adventures of Odysseus on his way home—adventures partly invented by the author of the *Odyssey*, partly borrowed from old tales, and neatly fitted into the narrative, but all designed to exhibit the hero in his character of the "man of many devices," grappling with fortune in her most varied shapes and forms. These adventures and wanderings of Odysseus are necessary not only for this purpose, but to fill up the twice ten years of his absence, and so give time both for Telemachus to arrive at man's estate and also for the presumptuous security of the wooers to reach its height. Artistically, therefore, these episodes are necessary, but they must not distract our attention from the fact that the real interest of the story is concentrated in Ithaca.

We need not repeat here the story of Penelope, her web and her wooers—nor is it even necessary in this case to enlarge upon the mode of

operation of the Invisible Justice. In the *Odyssey* it is not the hidden *atē* of the individual, working out its own retribution, that we have to do with, but the *opis* of the gods, marking invisibly what goes on and then descending in the sight of all men, that all may see it and take warning. The idea of justice in the *Odyssey*, however, if not so delicately and finely conceived as in the *Iliad*, is both more artistically framed and more dramatically handled.

The wooers have had abundance of warning—their fate does not overtake them unawares; but throughout the refrain runs: "They fear not the *opis* of the gods." They have molested a helpless woman and a youth not yet able to protect either her or himself; they have eaten the fat and drunk the sweet day after day, self-invited in another man's house, at another man's cost; they have planned the death of the heir, that they might seize upon his inheritance; finally they add yet this above all, that they scorn and maltreat one of those who are under the special care of Zeus, one of those who are "from Zeus," a stranger and beggar. Their cup of iniquity is, therefore, full; they have trampled on the great unwritten laws, and retribution comes upon them at once naturally and directly from Zeus in the person of the supposed beggar—the long-absent Odysseus.

Nothing in the whole range of literature is more dramatically conceived than the vengeance of Odysseus. We have the contrast between the insolent nonchalance of the wooers and the stern silence of the beggar, at whose cost they are feasting; the undercurrent: "I mark, I heed;" the arrival of the significant day of vengeance; the festival of the far-darter Apollo, lord of the bow; the omens sent to both sides—to Odysseus the double sign of thunder and the voice (p. 261), to the wooers an eagle on their left, bearing a trembling dove; then comes the fresh insult offered to Odysseus, the vision of the impending doom, the blood-sprinkled hall seen by Theoclymenus, the seer; the crowning trial of archery that is to decide the pretensions of the wooers, their ineffectual attempts to draw the mighty bow of Odysseus, its passing into the hands of its rightful owner, the beggar, and his final declaration, as he strips him of his rags (*Od.*, xxii. 35): "Ye dogs! ye imagined that I would never more come back to my home from the land of the Trojans, that ye might spoil my house. . . . Neither fearing the gods that hold wide heaven nor the indignation of men that shall be hereafter!—but now are ye all made fast in the bands of death"—leading up to the awful slaughter that ensues. All this is worked out with a power and a force rarely equalled, certainly never surpassed, by any writer, ancient or modern.

## SUMMARY

We have now seen for ourselves, not what "they say" about the Homeric age, but what Homer himself says, and we ask, as we asked concerning the experiment in language, Was this great experiment in the seeking after God successful? To this reply must be, Absolutely, No!—relatively, Yes!

1. *The Nature of God.*—To revert to St. Paul's explanation, the *pselaphein*, we can see that the Greeks in their groping had come somewhat near to the truth. As the old patriarch in his blindness touched a son, but not the son whom he sought—so had the Greeks touched a father, but not the Great Father of Man. Nevertheless, they were raised above surrounding nations, in that they had cherished and worked out, to the best of their power, the germ of divine truth which they brought with them from the old Aryan home; in that, distorted as was their version of the truth, they had clung to the thought of the Supreme Being as the Father in the heavens. They are raised above



surrounding nations, moreover, by their representations of the gods as beings, on the whole well-disposed towards man. In the Greek gods good at least mingles with the evil; they are human, often benign—not monsters of cruelty, not devils, like the gods of the Phœnicians. Herein lies the relative success of this particular experiment, and, considering the age, it is a great one.

The Greek divinities, however, are not “divine” in any true sense of the word. Of that attribute of God which we call holiness, says Nägelsbach, there is not a trace in Homer, from beginning to end. With one hand the Greek builds up the divine; with the other he pulls it down. As we have seen, the fault is not Homer’s. His conceptions of the divine are evolved out of the misunderstandings of centuries. There can be no doubt that, from his own standpoint, Homer has set before us the very best side of the religious thought of his age. Nevertheless, Homer’s conception of the divine must be regarded absolutely as a failure.

2. *Revelation.*—We have seen the Greeks trying in every way to draw near to God—to learn His will by signs from within and from without, by every means natural and human; and, finally, we have seen them rejecting each in turn, either as insufficient or as untrustworthy. Had, then, the Greeks no light, no revelation whatsoever?

Yes, verily! they had a double revelation—the stamp of God within, the witness of the great unwritten laws; the voice of God without, in the history of their own race, their successes and their failures.

We ask the reader to recall to mind the great laws as we saw them in operation among this chosen Aryan people—chosen for the very purpose, as it were, of bearing witness to the great fact that man is made in the image of God—that within him he bears the stamp of his divine birth. Look at these old pre-historic records of lives lived before what we call “intellectual culture” was so much as thought of; look at the manliness, the honesty, the reverence which breathe throughout; look at the sweet and gracious *aidos*, with its modesty, its gentle care for others, its generosity, and then explain, if you can, how in such an age all this can have arisen, whence it can have proceeded, if not directly from God.

Then look at the revelation from without—the voice of the Invisible Justice in *dikē*, pointing out the way whereby the social fabric may be built up and maintained on the only lasting basis. Look at the relations between parents and children, between rulers and ruled. See the frank recognition of *Noblesse oblige*!—they that enjoy the honours of life must justify their position: they must go “straight forward,” up into the very forefront of the fighters in life’s battles. Look at the relation of husband and wife in Homer—at a Hector and Andromache, an Odysseus and Penelope, an Alcinous and Aretē. Is the wife in these pre-historic scenes the “helpmeet” of the husband, or is she not? Look, again, at the relation of master and slave in Homer as depicted in an Odysseus and an Eumæus, the gentleness of the one calling forth the life-long devotion of the other. Look at the beginnings of international law—hospitality to be shown to the stranger who comes “from Zeus,” the faithful covenant to be kept even with an enemy, the dead to receive the due of the dead. Think, finally, of the portrayal of the *atē* in the individual conscience—the remorse of a Helen, an Achilles, a Hector—and say whether St. Paul is not justified in declaring that the Gentiles, which had not the law, yet showed “the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Romans ii. 14, 15.

The Greeks themselves at least knew that they were made in the image of God—that there was a something divine within them. They confessed to it in the very fact that they regarded every defection from the straight path as a “darkening” of some inner knowledge, a “blinding” of some inward sight, a “missing” of the true mark and aim of life.

Verily, our God hath never left Himself without witness: “rain from heaven and fruitful seasons” testified to His goodness, the very nobleness of man to the grand destiny which He had designed for him, the conception of the Invisible Justice to the discipline and training of a chosen people by the Judge of all the earth.

Homer is no divinely inspired prophet; it was not given to him to forestall by any revelation of the truth future experiments in the seeking after God, but Homer certainly is a divinely-inspired recorder of past experiments and interpreter of human life. As such he is a teacher, not for his own age or nation only, but for all time.



## § VI.—PREPARATION FOR THE SECOND GREAT PERIOD

“HOMER” marks the completion of the first great period in the history of the Greek people—a period preceded, as we saw, by long centuries of preparatory development and discipline.

The first grand manifestation of Greek genius, the *Iliad*, carried in the germ from the mother-country, came to maturity in the colonies on the western shores of Asia Minor, and there the intellectual fire long continued to burn brightly. Asia Minor was not only the foster-mother of epic, but the mother of lyric poetry, of philosophy, science, and history; and we shall presently have to examine the result of some of the experiments that went on ceaselessly in her great centres of life.

Meantime it is the mother-country to which we must now turn our attention, in order to observe how she also is prepared for her share in the grand work. Her fallow ground has now to be broken up, ploughed, and harrowed; she has to receive the seeds of many new ideas; the young plants have to be tried by storm, as well as nourished by the rain and the sunshine, before that second great harvest, which we call the classical period, is ripe for in-gathering.

To set forth here, however, all the details of this preparation would, in the space at our disposal, be impossible. The centuries which intervene between Homer and Pindar are centuries of change and intense activity. In addition to the intellectual progress on the Asiatic coast and in the colonies, they witnessed, both in mother-country and colonies, the rise of the great idea of the State in her legislative and educative capacities—European Greece saw the development of the Spartan constitution, the overthrow of the monarchy generally throughout the land, the setting up in succession of the aristocracy, the oligarchy and the tyranny, and the gradual rise in Athens of the people to the possession of power.

All these stages of progress, and the problems of exceeding interest to which they give rise, belong to the history of the Greek experiments in political and social life rather than to our present subject. They would require, moreover, not one volume but several to do them anything like justice. We must confine ourselves here, therefore, to a review of some of the influences which were at work during the preparation, moulding the character of the people, and gradually leading up to that strain of religious thought as we see it in the great writers of the classical period.

### I.—HESIOD

The colonists had taken with them from the mother-country a grand inheritance, not only in the national myths and sagas, but in the moral conceptions of the great unwritten laws, and richly did they “repay their dear mother,” as Homer would have put it, for “this their nurture.” There would seem to have been from the first a lively intercourse between the new settlements and the old home, and the Homeric poems, with all their noble and generous ideals, soon made their way amid the mountains and valleys of

Greece proper, breaking down prejudice and isolation, and building up the feeling of brotherhood and unity which eventually found expression in the common name of "Hellenes."

Among the Asiatic Greeks who came to the mother-country and finally resolved to settle there was the father of the poet Hesiod. He is supposed to have been by occupation a sailor and by birth a native of the Æolian Cyne, one of the seven cities which claimed to have been the birthplace of Homer. Naturally, he selected for his residence in European Greece an Æolian district, and settled at Ascra, a little place at the foot of Mount Helicon, near Thespiæ, in Bœotia, where he seems to have bought a small property.

The exact period to which Hesiod is to be assigned, however, is not certain. Herodotus makes the poet a contemporary of Homer, but this is mere conjecture on the part of the historian, disproved from the evidence afforded by the works attributed to Hesiod. In all probability the latter must be placed at least one hundred years later than his great predecessor.

Two important poems have come down to us under the name of Hesiod—the *Theogony* and the *Works and Days*. Whether both are to be attributed to the same author or not is a question on which critics are divided. In any case, both works helped in the great preparation by defining—unintentionally, but with unmistakable precision—the boundary line between the two streams of religion and mythology, which we saw flowing together, and often mingling, in Homer.

I. The *Theogony* owes its existence to the order-loving, systematising spirit of the Greeks. Its object is explained in the name *Theo-gonia*—genealogy of the gods; and its author professes to have received his inspiration from the Muses themselves. Whilst feeding his flocks on Helicon, they gave to him the laurel-wand of the singer, breathed into him a divine voice, that he should declare both the future and the past, and bade him hymn the race of the blessed ones that live for ever. Thus commissioned, the poet proceeds, after first giving an account of the Muses, his patronesses, to describe the evolution of the existing world from chaos; the union of Gæa and Uranus, earth and sky; the birth of the Titans; the rebellion of Kronus-of-the-crooked-counsels against his father Uranus, and his seizure of the throne of the world; the union of Kronus and Rhea, and birth of a new race of gods, the Olympians; the war between the Titans and the new gods of Olympus; finally, the victory of Zeus, representative of the world-order, over Kronus and the Titans, symbols of the forces of confusion and disorder.

The remainder of the *Theogony* is occupied by further details concerning gods and Titans, and the genealogies of the heroes, such as Heracles and Achilles, who traced their descent from the immortals. The work, therefore, contains a Cosmogony, a Theogony, and a "Heroogony." Its whole tone is gloomy, and the style often deserving of the criticism passed upon it by Colonel Mure (*History of Greek Literature*, ii. p. 421). "The Hesiodic style," he says, "is wild and fantastic without originality, and turgid without dignity. The joyous is suddenly converted into the pathetic, the tender into the terrible, with an almost burlesque effect."<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, it must be admitted that in the description of the war with the Titans there are several grand and striking passages. The whole episode seems to have afforded not a few hints to our own Milton.

From the outline given it will be seen that the *Theogony* is from beginning to end strictly "mythological." It concerns itself only with the tales told about the gods. Of the hidden working of the great unwritten laws, or of any

<sup>1</sup> This criticism does not apply to the *Works and Days*.



“religious” feeling, in the literal sense of the term, there is hardly a trace. Three features may be said to be characteristic of the work :—

1. The predominance in it of foreign elements. The author of the *Theogony* appears to have brought together every myth on which he could lay hands, and both Phœnicia and Phrygia seem to have been no small contributors to the *ensemble*. These foreign branches, grafted on to the comparatively pure stock of native Greek mythology, betray their origin by their inherent coarseness.

2. Another repulsive feature of the *Theogony* is its want of proportion. This may seem a strange defect to ascribe to the work of a Greek, but it is nevertheless true. The genealogy, *e.g.*, of gods and that of monsters, such as the Chimæra and the Sphinx, are related with equal gravity, and as though both were equally intended to be received with faith.

3. The character of Zeus appears in the *Theogony* in the worst light. With all its faults the portraiture of Homer is yet grand and noble in part, as we have seen. Moreover, the early Greek could and did see in the Homeric Zeus not only the upholder of the world-order, but a being who might perchance feel for himself in the troubles of life. The god who could say “My heart is woe for Hector,” and who could comfort old Priam by the message that “Although afar off, Zeus yet had great care and pity for him,” was still a god that might be loved. But the Zeus of the *Theogony* has no redeeming qualities : he hates men, persecutes their champion Prometheus for endeavouring to alleviate their misery, and finally revenges himself on the human race by sending the “lovely evil,” Pandora, to work it woe.<sup>1</sup>

Looking now at the *Theogony* as an experiment, it is evident that the author—in a way not at all intended—conferred a great benefit upon his countrymen by thus bringing together in all their bald simplicity the myths of his day. The repulsive elements—lightly passed over, or totally rejected, by the fine taste of a Homer—are in the *Theogony* caught out of their misty traditional form, laid hold of, as it were, and forced to reveal themselves, that their hideousness may be plainly seen by all, and their right to existence as statements concerning the Divine challenged.

The challenge, let us note, was not long in being taken up, and thus the *Theogony* itself—the *fons et origo* of much trouble and perplexity—became one powerful cause of the great revolt of the thinkers of Greece, shortly to be noted.

In estimating the influence of the *Theogony*, we have been obliged to look at it and its myths as they appear on the surface ; for, as is evident from Plato, in later days the masses understood literally the tales about the gods. Nevertheless, there can hardly be a doubt that the myths of the *Theogony*, crude as they are, have a deeper meaning. This would seem, indeed, to be implied by the words attributed to the Muses who inspired the poet. “We know to sing many fictions like to truths,” they say, “and we know also, when we will, to speak truth” (*Theog.*, 27). The cosmical myth of the three dynasties—an “almost” philosophic attempt to account for the existing state of things—may, therefore, probably be one of these “fictions like to truths.” As such it was viewed by the Stoic philosophers.

II. *The Works and Days*.—Passing now to the *Works and Days*, we come to a work of a totally different character. As stated, there are those who hold it to be the production of the author of the *Theogony*. Such an assumption, however, would seem to be contradicted by the radical difference between the two.

<sup>1</sup> For the myths of the *Theogony* and the *Works and Days* we must refer the reader to *Hellas*, p. 79 *et seq.*

Before proceeding to examine the work, let us just take a brief glance at its background. In the *Works and Days* Hesiod depicts for us conditions of life differing *toto cælo* from those which we have learned to know in Homer. Homer represents the acme of one period, the very height of chivalrous sentiment, and free open-handed generosity. The great wave, however, has receded, and Hesiod shows us the commencement of another period, the actors in which have again to work their way upward out of a narrow and depressing environment. The difference between the two poets is not to be entirely explained by saying, with Alexander the Great, that Homer is the poet for princes, Hesiod the poet for peasants. Granted that, so far as genius is concerned, Hesiod may not be named in the same breath with Homer—the contrast presented by the general tone of their works is, nevertheless, traceable also to the different conditions under which they were produced. When we reach Hesiod, the courtly life depicted by Homer has either passed away or is fast disappearing. The state of society which we meet with in Hesiod is that which naturally and necessarily follows upon the other. War has ceased; the great migrations are over; the country is apparently settled, and the fighting men have long since been disbanded. They have been obliged to betake themselves again to agriculture, or to find some other means of livelihood, for there are evidently now no great princes willing to keep open table and entertain starvelings, as the beggar is entertained in the *Odyssey*. Each man is thrown on his own resources, and life is again a struggle for the bare means of subsistence. In short, the life that Hesiod paints in the *Works and Days* is the first stage in the development of the poorer freemen of Greece. This first stage, naturally, is the life of the farmer or the sailor; later, the same class will flock into the cities and turn to industrial pursuits and to commerce. For such members of society Homer had no special message. He speaks to the prince, to the fighting man, and to the slave. Now that another great class is fast coming into existence—a body of men who will make short work with princes, and seek to be on an equality with aristocrats—men who must both fight and work, but will do neither on compulsion—a new message of an entirely different character is needed, and this message is entrusted to Hesiod—the author, that is, of the *Works and Days*. The author of the *Theogony*, as we have seen, has no part or lot in this matter.

Reverting to the comparison so often made between Homer and Hesiod, there can be, of course, but one opinion as to which of the two is the greater or the more delightful. To pass from Homer to Hesiod is, literally, to pass from the bright blue sky and the glorious sunshine of the Isles of Greece into the fogs and the fat “wheat-mists” of Bœotia. We shudder when we turn away from a Hector and an Andromache, a Nestor, an Odysseus, and all the great-hearted Achæans whom we have learnt to know on the plain of the Scamander, and find ourselves face to face with the narrow aims and cares of the Bœotian freeholder. We have no desire to exchange the vision of the shining halls of Alcinous for that of the Bœotian farmer, with his coat of hide thrown over his back and his hat of felt drawn down over his ears, as he trudges along behind his oxen in the bleak north wind.

Nevertheless, when our eyes have become accustomed to the dim atmosphere and the circumscribed range of the surroundings, we can see that in the author of the *Works and Days* we have to do with a man of sterling worth, and—*pare* the shade of Alexander—one from whom princes as well as peasants could learn something.

We shall probably understand Hesiod better if we can once disabuse our minds of the idea that he is a “poet.” His claim to the name is simply that



he has expressed his thoughts in verse; but as to this he had no choice, for "prose" was not yet in existence.

The *Works and Days* is composed of two parts, of which the second alone answers to the title, consisting of a calendar of farming "Works," and the "Days," lucky or unlucky, on which things may, or may not, be successfully begun. This portion does not concern us here, although we may note in passing that it seems to have afforded Virgil many suggestions for the *Georgics*.

In order to understand the purport of the first part, which forms a sort of introduction to the second, we must premise that the poet's brother, Perses, by means of flattering and bribing the judges, had contrived to obtain in a lawsuit much more than his fair share of the patrimony. He has, however, run through his ill-gotten gains, and now comes to the injured brother for help. This Hesiod, to his credit, has evidently given, despite his wrongs; but he cannot go on supporting Perses in idleness, and he now addresses an earnest exhortation both to him and the "bribe-swallowing kings" or judges<sup>1</sup> to take heed to their ways, and walk henceforth in the paths of righteousness. This exhortation forms that portion of the *Works and Days* which interests us, and we propose therefore to examine it very briefly—the work itself is short—in the same way as we examined the Homeric poems, that we may see for ourselves whether the intervening century has made any change in the religious notions of the Greeks or not.

*The Idea of "God."*—The *Works and Days* opens with an invocation which gives the keynote to the whole poem. Essential as is the passage, regarded in this light, it is nevertheless probable that it did not belong originally to the work,<sup>2</sup> but was prefixed later by some disciple of the master, some member of the Hesiodic "School." It thoroughly represents, however, the mind of the Boeotian poet, and may fitly be compared, not only with many texts of the *Iliad* (see p. 242), but with many portions of our own Scriptures.

"Ye Muses from Pieria," the poet prays, "ye who celebrate in song, come speak of Zeus and hymn your sire, through whom mortals are alike famed and fameless, named and nameless, by hest of mighty Zeus. For easily, indeed, doth he make strong, and easily cast down the strong; easily doth he minish the mighty, and magnify the obscure;<sup>3</sup> easily, too, doth he make straight the crooked, and wither the proud in heart—high-thundering Zeus, who dwelleth in mansions highest. Harken, O thou! see, and mark, and guide the judgment righteously."<sup>4</sup>

*The Invisible Justice.*—This guiding of the judgments, and watching over justice in all its relations to the great unwritten laws, is the special function of Zeus. His eye seeth and perceiveth all things, nor doth it escape him what manner of justice a city encloseth within it (*Opp.*, 267). Justice (Dike) is his own daughter (*Opp.*, 256), "a virgin glorious, and revered by the gods that hold Olympus. Whosoever any one hindereth her or raileth against her, straightway she taketh her seat by her father, Zeus Kronion, and speaketh of the mind of unjust men, that so the people may pay for the sins<sup>5</sup> of rulers, who devise grievous things, and turn Justice from her path."

<sup>1</sup> The *basileis*-kings of Hesiod are probably the nobles, who succeeded to power on the overthrow of the monarchy in the different little States of Greece. There is no reference in the poem to the exercise of any kingly function other than the administration of justice.

<sup>2</sup> The Thespians had in their possession the oldest "edition" of the *Works and Days*, inscribed on metal. This began with the present v. ii. (Paus., ix. 314).

<sup>3</sup> "God is the Judge: He putteth down one, and setteth up another" (Psalm lxxv. 7). "The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich; and bringeth low, and lifteth up" (1 Sam. ii. 7).

<sup>4</sup> Lit., make straight the *themistes* in *dikē*.

<sup>5</sup> *Atasthalias*—blind follies (see p. 289).

Zeus has, too, other unseen watchers abroad (*Opp.*, 249): For "close at hand amongst men are immortals, observing those who wear out one another with crooked judgments, regardless of the vengeance (*opis*) of the gods. For upon earth are thrice ten thousand immortals, Zeus' guardians of mortal men. Wrapt in mist, they go to and fro throughout the earth, and watch both the just judgments (*dikas*) and the evil deeds of men."

Moreover, the poet is satisfied that there are blessings in store for the good, heavy penalties to be paid by the bad (*Opp.*, 225 *et seq.*).

"Those who give straightforward judgment to strangers," mark, "and to the home-born, and no whit overstep the right, their city flourisheth, the people prosper within her. Peace nourisheth men throughout the land, nor ever to them doth far-seeing Zeus ordain grievous war; neither doth famine nor ruin (*atē*) company with men that judge in righteousness. . . . For them the earth bringeth forth abundantly; on the mountains the oak bears on its summit acorns, and in its trunk honey-bees; the woolly sheep are weighed down with fleeces; they flourish in blessings for ever and aye. Nor do they go down to the sea in ships,<sup>1</sup> for Earth, the grain-giver, yields her fruit."

"But," on the other hand, "they who cherish wrong (*hybris*) and evil, and merciless deeds, for them the son of Kronus, far-seeing Zeus, decreeth justice (*dikē* in the sense of punishment). Oft hath even a whole city suffered for one bad man who sinneth and deviseth froward things. On them from heaven Kronion bringeth great woe, famine and plague together, and the people waste away. Neither do the women bring forth children, and houses come to nought (for want of heirs) by the counsels of Olympian Zeus. Yet again, at another time, he destroyeth their wide army, or layeth low their walls, or upon their ships in the sea doth Kronides take vengeance."

A very remarkable feature of the poet's view of justice is one that was afterwards worked out with deep insight by Æschylus, viz., that the punishment of the sins of the father is visited upon the children. The posterity of the false swearer especially, but also of the man who gains wealth by unjust means, becomes obscure (*Opp.*, 284, 321).

In the foregoing and similar passages we are reminded again and again of the denunciations of the old prophets of Israel upon a backsliding people. Hesiod, like Homer, knows full well that there is in the world a great power which makes for righteousness.

Nevertheless, he too, like Homer, pulls down with one hand what he builds up with the other, for he introduces the myth of Pandora on purpose to show that it was Zeus himself who had "devised baneful cares for man," in order that they might be bound to perpetual toil. The Pandora-myth, taken in conjunction with the myth of the five ages of man, is apparently an echo or a distorted version, derived from Semitic sources, of the fall of man. In the Greek conception, however, the prime cause of the fall, sin, has disappeared, and the penalty of toil is laid upon the human race merely to gratify the revenge of Zeus against Prometheus. Even if we take that view of the Prometheus-myth which makes Zeus justly incensed against the great Titan, the moral difficulty remains that Zeus is acting unrighteously in visiting his wrath upon helpless creatures who are, according to the myth, in no way to blame. This difficulty in the character of Zeus, however, does not seem to trouble Hesiod, any more than similar difficulties troubled the Homer of the *Iliad*. The two streams of religion and mythology run calmly on side by side, without apparently raising any perplexing questions in the good man's

<sup>1</sup> The meaning is, they are not compelled to hazard their lives, Earth yields enough for all.



soul. And yet the poet of the *Odyssey* had put the matter in the right light: "How vainly men do blame the gods! for from us, they say, cometh evil, whereas of themselves, of their own blind follies, they have woes beyond what is ordained" (see *ante*, p. 305).

*Moral Ideals.*—It is evident that the chivalrous ideals of Homer can hardly be looked for from the Hesiodic standpoint. The high *Schwung* is over, and men find themselves face to face with stern necessity. Of the change Hesiod himself is quite conscious, and he explains it as a phase in the degeneracy of the human race. The myth of the five ages—the golden, sylvan, bronze, heroic, and iron ages of the world—is related to show the gradual deterioration of mankind. The heroes, the demi-gods, hymned by Homer and others, perished before Thebes and Troy; now the last, the iron stage, has been reached, and no pessimist in any period of the world's history can possibly have taken a gloomier view of the outlook over his own century than does Hesiod of his. Everything is going from bad to worse; the great unwritten laws will shortly all be trampled under foot; *Faustrecht*, the justice-of-the-fist, will prevail; parents will be dishonoured, cities plundered, justice violated in every way, until, at the last, so desperate will be the conditions of life that Aidos and Nemesis, reverence and righteous indignation, will gather their white raiment about them, and depart altogether from among men (*Opp.*, 197).

There are but three remedies that can keep society together—justice, good faith, and honest work. These are the ideals of Hesiod, and noble ideals too.

1. Justice, according to Hesiod, is that which distinguishes man *quâ* man, and marks him off from the brutes (*Opp.*, 277). "Kronion," he says, "hath ordained justice for a law<sup>1</sup> to men; to fish indeed, and beasts, and winged fowl hath he given to devour one another, for justice is not among them, but to men he hath given justice, which is far best."

Here *dikē* is opposed to violence and the right of might; but it still means, as in Homer, the "way pointed out" for the fulfilment of all the obligations of the unwritten laws, as the following passage clearly shows (*Opp.*, 327):—

"Whoso shall have worked evil to suppliant or stranger, whoso shall have deeply sinned against his brother, whoso wrongeth orphan children recklessly, whoso taunteth an aged parent on the threshold of grievous old age, assailing him with harsh words, with such an one Zeus himself is wroth, and in the end, in requital for unjust works, he layeth on him a sore penalty."

Nor is the first of the unwritten laws, reverence towards Zeus and the gods, forgotten (*Opp.*, 336).

"After thy power," says Hesiod, "do sacrifice to the immortal gods with reverence and purity, and burn moreover sleek thighs of oxen; at other times conciliate them with libation and incense, both when thou liest down and when the sacred light appeareth, that they may bear towards thee a gracious heart and mind, that so thou mayest buy the land of others, not others thine."

The motive for conciliating the gods, "that thou mayest buy the land of others," is one which must not be too harshly judged. In later days Plato found great fault with both Homer and Hesiod for, as it were, bribing the people to choose the good by promises of temporal blessings. We can only urge here, as elsewhere, "First the natural, then the spiritual." Temporal blessings accompanied the fulfilment of the Divine commands among the chosen people, and we shall probably be right in concluding that the great teacher educated the nations in the same way. When Hesiod denounces sin, and fore-

<sup>1</sup> *Nomos*—one of the first instances of the use of the word *nomos*, custom, in this sense (see *ante*, p. 95).

tells its consequences, or when he holds out the prospect of a blessing on the righteous, he is simply drawing upon the universal experience of his nation. The opening words of the counsel, "After thy power do sacrifice," were quoted with approval by Socrates. Poverty shall not prevent a man from offering worship pleasing to the immortals: "It is accepted according to that a man hath, not according to that he hath not."

It is, perhaps, the misfortune rather than the fault of the old poet that he seems, in certain respects, to fall short of the generous *aïdos* of Homer. The contest with poverty and the bitter experience of injustice have undoubtedly narrowed and warped his nature somewhat. Nevertheless, Hesiod is sound at heart. We must not attempt to form our estimate of him as regards generosity by isolated "texts." Such a method of dealing with any writer is unfair, and Hesiod has especially suffered from this mode of interpretation, owing to the ready way in which his pithy sayings allow themselves to be detached from the context.

His maxims must either be read in their natural position, or the work must be treated as a whole, and maxim compared with maxim. To do otherwise with any writer is to dismember him, to present the eye or the cheek, and say, "Behold the portrait!"

For instance, if in one passage Hesiod rails at women (*Opp.*, 373), we must set against it another, in which he says emphatically (*Opp.*, 702), "Nothing better than the good wife doth a man gain."

Then, again, there is the often-quoted saying (*Opp.*, 354), "Give to him that may have given: give not to him that hath not given." Taken by itself the sentiment repels us as the acme of selfishness. But over against it we set another (*Opp.*, 717), "Never have the cruelty to reproach a man with ruinous heart-breaking poverty; it is the gift of the blessed ones that live for ever." The matter thus rights itself. We remember that Hesiod has helped the brother who injured him, and pled the cause of the suppliant, the stranger, and the orphan, and we infer that the "gifts" which are not to be given unless reciprocated are complimentary gifts, presented at discretion by one person to another of equal station.

Of the "little gift" to the distressed dear to Zeus Hesiod knew probably as much as did the divine thrall, Eumæus. "If a man is willing," he says in another passage (*Opp.*, 357), "he will even give much; he delights in his gift, and it rejoices his soul. But whosoever, by yielding to his shamelessness, shall have seized upon anything, be it ever so little, that little hath frozen his heart's blood." Could the opposite effects of the generous "giving," that blesses him that gives as well as him that takes, and the unjust "seizing," that hardens a man's better nature, be more clearly put? If Hesiod did not know exactly that it is more blessed to give than to receive, he yet did know that it is more blessed to give than to seize.

Again Hesiod says (*Opp.*, 709) that, if one has been injured by a friend, that "friend" is to be requited twice as much. Here he certainly goes beyond the doctrine of antiquity, "eye for eye, tooth for tooth." Double resentment is to be dealt out, on the score that the man had professed friendliness. We are not going to defend Hesiod beyond pointing out the context. He immediately adds, "But if he lead the way towards friendship again, and be willing to give satisfaction (*dikê*), accept it," precisely the advice offered by old Phoenix to Achilles, and rejected by the hero.

2. *Good Faith.*—Naturally, from the circumstances under which the *Works and Days* was produced, and the wrong done to Hesiod himself, justice tends to take with him the more technical and restricted sense of impartiality in the



decisions of the judges, and in the observance of the oath sworn by witnesses. The violation of the faithful oath is, as we have seen, the special sin which is visited upon the children (*Opp.*, 284): "He who in bearing witness shall wittingly have taken a false oath, and lied," says Hesiod, "in that he hath hindered justice, hath sinned past remedy, and his posterity becometh obscure; but the posterity of the man of true oath is the nobler."

"O Perses," argues the poet, addressing his brother (*Opp.*, 213, 217), "do thou hearken to justice, and increase not wrong (*hybris*). . . . For in the end justice subdueth wrong. By suffering, even a witless man learneth this."

With the judges who can be turned from the straight path by bribes Hesiod is even more indignant, for they bring ruin on the whole community. "For there runneth together with crooked judgments," he says (*Opp.*, 219), "straightway the avenger of the oath.<sup>1</sup> There is tumult when Justice is dragged whithersoever bribe-swallowing men lead her, and perversely decide the existing rights (*themistes*). And Dikē, shrouded in mist, followeth, lamenting the city and abodes of peoples, bringing evil on men who shall have driven her out, and not dispensed with fairness."

Hesiod is not afraid to bring the truth home to the evil-doer, even though he be in power. "Bearing these things in mind, ye kings, ye swallows of the bribe," he says (*Opp.*, 263), with unflinching boldness, "make straight paths for yourselves and forsake utterly crooked judgments. For himself doth the man work ill that worketh ill for another, and the evil counsel is worst to him that devised it," for the eye of Zeus perceiveth all things, and knoweth what manner of justice the city encloseth.

3. Work, according to Hesiod, is, after justice and good faith, the great panacea for the troubles of society. The poet is no less the preacher of the doctrine of work than of the doctrine of righteousness. The two, in his esteem, hang together. If justice has been decreed by Zeus as a law for man, no less certainly does the necessity for work exist by his will. "Work, senseless Perses," he says (*Opp.*, 397), "the works which the gods have marked out for men." The word rendered "marked out"<sup>2</sup> would seem to imply the idea of a special work awaiting each individual. If left undone, injustice must ensue, as the burden falls upon those who have already their own obligations to fulfil. "With that man," says Hesiod again (*Opp.*, 303), "both gods and men are indignant—the man who liveth without working, like in temper to stingless drones, that idly waste and consume the labour of the bees. Let it be a pleasure to thee to set in order fitting labours, that so thy barns may be full of fruits in their season. By working thou wilt be dearer to the immortals, yea, and to mortals, for greatly do they detest sluggards. Work," he says emphatically, "is no disgrace, but sloth is a disgrace. If thou work, speedily will the non-worker vie with thee in growing rich, for fame and glory accompany wealth."

The last argument is characteristically Hellenic, for the spirit of "vying" or emulation is, as we said long ago (p. 23), one mainspring of action in the Greek nature. So important does emulation appear to Hesiod as a motive power that he opens his poem by singing its praises (*Opp.*, 11 *et seq.*). There are two kinds of strife, he says, upon earth, but they must not be confounded, for they are of entirely different minds. One fosters war and discord, cruel is she and no mortal loves her; but the other has been placed at the roots of earth by Zeus himself, he who guideth all things. This strife is far best for men, for she can stir up even a handless man, shiftless though he be, to work.

<sup>1</sup> Horkos, the god of the oath.

<sup>2</sup> *Diētekmēranto*, more specific than merely "ordained."

When a needy man sees a rich one, he too hasteth to plough and to plant and set his house in order, for neighbour rivalleth neighbour in hastening towards wealth. The poet's conclusion therefore is that "good for mortals is this strife," *i.e.* emulation. Yet the dangers of such emulation were not unknown even in the days of Hesiod, as is evident from the next verses: "Potter grudgeth against potter, craftsman against craftsman; poor man is jealous of poor man, poet of poet." Nevertheless, he holds fast to the belief that emulation is healthful and good in itself, for he returns again to the charge, as we have seen.

We must not suppose, however, that because the poet sets forth wealth, and the fame and glory which accompany it, as an incentive to toil, that he lays great stress upon the possession of riches for their own sake. Nay, his first condemnation of bribe-swallowing kings is that they, "fools! neither know how much greater the half is than the whole, nor yet how much nourishment there is in mallow and asphodel." The man who can be content with the moderate allowance of life's goods expressed by the "half," in contrast to the "whole" which others grasp at, and who can satisfy his hunger with the proverbial dinner of herbs, which he may have for the gathering, can snap his fingers at the world. He is richer far and happier than the swallows of the bribe. "Gain not base gains," says the poet in another place; "base gains are equal to losses" (*Opp.*, 352).

So far from proclaiming the great doctrine of work as a mere stepping-stone to the acquisition of wealth, Hesiod has immortalised himself for all time by declaring plainly its intimate connection with the highest aim of life—the gaining of the *aretē*, the true manliness of soul, that which we now call virtue:—

"Badness," he says, in the famous parable of the two paths (*Opp.*, 287), "is easily to be chosen in crowds, for smooth is the way, and close at hand it dwells. But before virtue the immortal gods have set toil; long and steep is the way, and rugged at the first; but when the summit is reached, then indeed is the path easy, however hard may have been the ascent."

A parable on which the Master Himself has set the stamp of His approval.

*Summary.*—In the Hesiod of the *Works and Days* we have a man of striking individuality of character. As he himself says: "A man who follows wise counsel is good, but best of all is the man who has thought out all things for himself" (*Opp.*, 293), who speaks and acts, that is, from deep personal conviction. Such an one is Hesiod. The very name, Hesi-odos, according to Bergk (*i.* 919, *note* 2), should be taken as meaning, literally, "he who goes his own way"; and in common with most of those who have had to mark out a path for themselves, Hesiod probably suffered for it.

Hesiod had no love for his native place—"a wretched village," he calls it (*Opp.*, 640), bad in winter, oppressive in summer, never pleasant; and according to tradition he removed to Orchomenus, where he died. Whether his stern denunciations of the bribe-swallowers—by making Ascra no longer safe for him—had any share in forcing him to leave his home, or not, we cannot tell; but certain it is that, in one way or other, he would have to pay the penalty of his courage.

His testimony to the deep-rooted and universal consciousness of the invisible justice, and the action of the great unwritten laws, is to us doubly valuable. It comes from a witness who has thought for himself, and from one who would not lie.

To his own nation, also, even the directness and uncompromising bluntness of the man were of service. The very beauty of the pictures in Homer might



tend to conceal from some their deep moral undercurrent. With Hesiod no such illusion is possible—his morality is surrounded by no glamour of beauty that could distract the mind from the main issue. "Be just, and thou shalt live. Be unjust, and thy doom is certain!" resounds from every page in a way that no one could pretend to misunderstand.

The *Works and Days*, like the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, was for centuries a textbook in the Greek schools. Boys learnt the maxims of Hesiod by heart. These maxims, therefore, passed into the very pith and marrow of the Hellenic people. "Base gains are equal to losses"—"The half is more than the whole"—"Observe moderation"<sup>1</sup>—"In all things fitness is best" (*Opp.*, 694)—"Never reproach a man with poverty."

To the author of these and kindred sayings—to the man who could persuade his countrymen that justice, good faith, and honest work are the pillars of the social fabric; who could teach them that the gaining of virtue calls for all the "manliness" in a man—to such an one, surely, must be assigned a high place among the makers of Hellas.

## II.—THE ORACLE

The rise of an institution such as the Oracle will not appear surprising to us if we bear in mind the results of our examination of the question of "revelation" in Homer. Every natural means that anxious minds could devise, of finding out the will of the Supreme Being, had been tried. Beginning with portents from without, thunder and lightning and the flight of birds—going on to omens from within, the dream, the voice, rumour—and ending in the guidance of the seer: all alike failed to satisfy the craving for some communication from God which might be depended upon absolutely. One means alone the Greeks had not yet tried. "Let us go direct to the god!" they seem to have now said. "Let us seek him in the place which he has himself chosen, where is his abiding presence. There we shall be sure of good faith. Zeus as Panomphæos = giver of all oracles, Apollo as interpreter of his counsels, will devise means whereby we shall not be deceived."

Such would seem to have been the reasoning which led to faith in the Oracle, an institution without parallel in its influence on the development of historic Greece.

As we have seen (p. 224), the *Iliad* knows both Dōdōna and Delphi as shrines of Zeus and Apollo respectively; and the *Odyssey* speaks of consulting the Oracle in both places. The passage in the *Odyssey* in which the minstrel Demodocus represents Agamemnon as having sought of Phœbus Apollo at goodly Pytho (*Od.*, viii. 79) links on the Homeric to the later mode of seeking Divine guidance, for in it the words rendered "by prophecy," "to inquire of the Oracle" are used in the sense in which they hold good in historic times. The root-meaning of the verb *chrao* is significant. It means to "furnish what is needful."<sup>2</sup> Here again is a silent but most certain proof of the real "origin" of religion—the needs of the human soul.

The *chresmoi*, or responses of the Oracle, took the place to a great extent of

<sup>1</sup> Literally, keep to the measure—*metra* (see *ante*, p. 99). Fitness—*kairos*, either due measure or the fitting season.

<sup>2</sup> Used in the middle voice, *chrao* signified the asking by the inquirer of what he needed; in the active voice, the furnishing by the god of the needful answer. The historic word for "response of the Oracle," *chrēsmos*, however, does not occur in Homer.

omens and portents. Nevertheless, both divination by signs (especially the auspices from the sacrificial victims), and the practice of consulting the seer, prevailed widely in historic times.

The only Oracles which need engage our attention here are those of Dōdōna and Delphi, but it should be observed that there were several other famous shrines in Greece proper—Bœotia alone had seven—besides the two celebrated Oracles of Apollo in Asia Minor—the Didymæan Oracle, near Miletus, and the Clarian Oracle, near Colophon.

(1) **Dōdōna.**—The most ancient Oracle in Greece was, according to Herodotus (ii. 52), the Pelasgian Oracle of Zeus at Dōdōna, where the will of the god was revealed by the mysterious rustling of the wind among the leaves of the sacred oak,<sup>1</sup> and by other signs.

The influence of Dōdōna was exerted chiefly among the rude tribes of the north-west, among whom it stood for ages as an outpost of Hellenic civilisation. By the Hellenes generally it was always regarded as a sacred and venerable relic of the earlier religious belief, and as second only to the Pythian Oracle in importance.

(2) **Delphi.**—Foremost, however, in weight and authority, and exercising an influence compared to which that of Dōdōna sinks into insignificance, was the Oracle at rocky Pytho—the valley in the bosom of Parnassus, known later as Delphi. Of the grandeur and solemnity of the spot chosen for the shrine, and its exceeding fitness to impress upon man the sense of his own nothingness and the majesty of the Divine, we have already spoken (Part I., p. 79). It is probable that from the very earliest times the glen in Parnassus was the home of some religion. In the *Eumenides* of Æschylus the Pythia (priestess) says that before Apollo the Oracle had been possessed by Gæa (Earth), Themis (Law), and Phœbe (Light). The date of the planting of the Apollo-cult in Delphi, however, is not certain. It was probably brought thither by the Dorians, when they migrated from Thessaly into the little valley of Doris. However this may have been, certain it is that between Delphi and Thessaly, in historic times, there was a connection regularly kept up by periodical pilgrimages.

For the mythical account of the founding of Delphi—of the slaying of the dragon of darkness by Apollo Pythius, and the bringing to his temple of the Cretans who were to serve him there by Apollo Delphinus—we must refer the reader to the companion volume. The last myth especially is well worth reading. It was probably invented by Dorians from Crete, who had seized upon the temple, and introduced into it their own special cult of Apollo Delphinus.

The myth is given in the Homeric hymn to the Pythian Apollo (177 *et seq.*), which dates probably from the sixth century B.C.; but, long before that, we find the Delphic Oracle wielding authority sufficient to arbitrate in a dispute concerning the succession to a throne. A verdict in favour of Pyrrhus, son of Aleuas, king of Thessaly, was given about the middle of the ninth century B.C. (Plut., *De Fratr. Am.*, 21; cf. Duncker, *Hist.*, i. 285); and it is remarkable that although, in this case, the Pythia upheld the claim of the son as rightful heir to the crown, against the wish of his father, yet the decision of the Oracle was accepted.

A few years later we find the influence of Delphi exerted in Peloponnesus. The constitution given by Lycurgus to Sparta (about 825 B.C.) was either

<sup>1</sup> *Phēgos*=the oak bearing edible acorns (see *ante*, p. 29).



framed or sanctioned by the Oracle.<sup>1</sup> In the first half of the next century, moreover, the fame of the Oracle has extended beyond Greece and reached the coasts of Asia, for we read of costly gifts being sent to Delphi by Midas, king of Phrygia, and in succession by the Lydian kings—Gyges, Alyattes, and Cræsus (Herodotus, i. 14, 50, 51).

To what, then, are we to attribute this great and ever-increasing fame and influence of the Delphic Oracle—an influence exercised first in its own immediate neighbourhood, then spreading to Peloponnesus, thence beyond the shores of Greece?

(1) **The Character of Apollo.**—In the first place, it would seem that the influence wielded by Delphi was due mainly to the character of the god whose shrine it was supposed to be. Apollo is one of the loftiest figures in the Greek religion. Even in Homer, as we have seen, his is a majestic and striking personality, free from most of the weaknesses of the gods of Olympus. In the hands of later thinkers his character becomes still more noble. As the god of light, every successive step towards the light, intellectual or moral, was naturally associated with him.

Two great ideas are specially connected with Apollo—the ideas of Purification from blood-guilt, and of Prediction of the future.

(a) *Purification.*—The sun's rays scare away darkness and burn up impurity. Impurity and death, physical or moral, must not approach Apollo. Hence, no dead bodies may be buried on his native Delos, island of light; no murderer, defiled with the blood of his brother-man, may draw nigh to the shrine of the god without previous purification. Such is Apollo's horror of bloodshed that he himself, after slaying the Pytho, the dragon of darkness, submits to purification and penalty in order to remove the blood-stain.

(b) *Prediction.*—The sun's rays, however, not only show up defilement and burn up impurity, but they clear away mist and clouds. Hence, Apollo is also the god of prophecy—the god who can remove the veil that hides the future, and indicate to mortals the right course to be pursued, having regard to the far distant issue known only to Father Zeus. Even in Homer it is Apollo who inspires the seer. But the seer had been found not always trustworthy—old Priam and Telemachus had already refused to believe in him. What reason, then, had the Greeks for supposing that the Oracle would be more true?

The Oracle, we reply, was in the first place a new experiment; the expounder of the will of heaven was to expound it in the very presence of the god, at his own chosen shrine—here was one safeguard. Another, to a light-seeking people like the Hellenes, must have been indisputably the moral advance in the teaching concerning the necessity for purification. It appealed to their highest moral sense. In the new light it is no longer enough to buy off the avengers of blood by payment of the *poinë* or sum of money for compensation, as in Homer. Even in Homer, as we have seen, the awful thought of the actual sin of shedding innocent blood is awakened—the close-pressing *atē* which settles like a thick cloud upon a man who has slain another begins now to be more clearly felt, and Delphi led the way in showing how, by purification and expiation, the stain might be washed away, the terrible pressure relieved. Apollo himself sets the example of obedience; as penalty for the slaying of the

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, indeed, says that Lycurgus borrowed his constitution from Crete; but there can be little doubt that the version which attributes it to Delphi is the more correct. It is vouched for by the poet Tyrtæus, who flourished about two centuries before the historian (Herodotus, i. 65, 66; Tyrtæus, *Frags.*, 4).

dragon<sup>1</sup> he tends the flocks of Admetus in Thessaly for eight long years (the *enneateris*, or great year), and at length finds purification in the glen of Tempe, whence he returns adorned with the laurel-wreath, in token of triumph, to his beloved Delphi, once more the true Phœbus, the pure unsullied sunlight. When the god himself had thus set the example of obedience, who could refuse to submit? Thus purification and a justly meted-out penalty came to be regarded by the law-abiding, order-loving Greek as "the better way"—the way by which a man could atone for his sin and be reconciled to the gods and to society—and the blood-feud gave place to the higher thought. "Apollo" thus worked out for the whole of Hellas the same beneficent change that, according to Æschylus, "Athena" effected in Athens.

The real moral advance in the teaching of Delphi, however, lies—not so much in the idea of the necessity of purification from blood-guilt, for that is as old as the saga of Ixion, who had been purified by Zeus himself—but in the growing belief that God is Himself a Being of purity. This conception alone is sufficient to account for the influence of Delphi amongst a people who were pre-eminently seekers after God.

To the above considerations we must add the fact that Delphi strenuously upheld the right, as we have seen it in the great unwritten laws. In the old Homeric hymn to Apollo, the commission to the Cretans to act as his deputies and priests ends with these words: "Take heed that ye watch well my temple, and receive according to my word the throngs who shall seek me here! For if ye allow yourselves in one unjust word or work, then shall other men become your rulers, and ye yourselves subject to them in time to come."

Justice was set forth from Delphi. The poet Alcæus in his Pæan (triumphal song to Apollo) says that, immediately on his birth, Zeus had sent Apollo to Delphi to prophesy *dikē* and *themis* to men. The sacredness of the oath, also, was proclaimed in language no less strong than that used by Hesiod. This is unmistakably shown in the Oracle given to a certain Spartan named Glaucus. The story, as told by Herodotus (vi. 86), is worth quoting. This Glaucus had won a great reputation for thorough honesty and trustworthiness, so much so that an Ionian from Miletus journeyed to Sparta expressly to deposit in the hands of Glaucus the half of his fortune, to be kept in safety until his sons should claim it by certain tokens. Glaucus accepts the trust, years pass, when one day the sons of the Milesian appear, show the tokens, and claim the deposit. To their amazement, the man of good faith declares that he has forgotten all about the matter; he will, however, look into it, and give them an answer in four months. Chagrined, the strangers depart without their money. Glaucus meanwhile goes to Delphi, and consults the Oracle as to whether he may by swearing an oath keep the booty. The Pythia replies as follows: "Glaucus, son of Epicydes, the present gain will be to get the upper hand by the oath, and seize the money. Swear, for death awaits also the man of true oath. But there is a nameless child of Horkos (the god of the oath) who has neither hands nor feet. Swiftly doth he pursue, until, having seized, he destroys the whole race and all the house. But the race of the man of true oath is more blessed"—words almost identical with those of Hesiod. Hearing this, Glaucus begs the god to pardon what he had said; but the Pythia replies that "to tempt the god and to commit the sin are one and the same thing." Glaucus restores the money; but the visitation descends upon him, for in three generations there is not left a single descendant or a single home<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Or, as other versions with more fitness say, as a penalty for killing the Cyclopes who had slain his son, Asclepius (Æsculapius, the god of medicine).

<sup>2</sup> *Hestia*—not a single hearth. The *hestia* of the family life has gone out in darkness.



belonging to him—he is destroyed, root and branch, out of Sparta. Note the advance implied in the words that “to tempt the god,” to try to get the Oracle to sanction the sin, is tantamount to the commission of it.

There can be no doubt that, as Welcker puts it, the idea of the youthful, clear-sighted, all-penetrating god, the lover of purity, of measure and moderation in all things, of music, was the life-germ of the great institution that sprang up at Delphi. For centuries Apollo, god of light, as we have said, was associated with every advance towards the light, whether intellectual or moral. He was the god not only of purification and reconciliation, not only of prediction and direction, but he was the leader of the Muses, the inspirer of the poet as well as of the seer, the patron of the musician as well as of the physician. And let us note, for it is a very remarkable fact, that Apollo acts throughout as the deputy only of Father Zeus. As soon as he is born he says, according to the old hymn, “To men I will declare the unerring counsels of Zeus”; and in the *Eumenides* of Æschylus, one of the deepest thinkers of Greece, he is represented as saying that, as a seer, he never lies; and that, on the seat of the seer, he had never said to man, woman, or city what Zeus, the father of the Olympians, had not bidden him say. This is the link which connects the new development with the old source.

(2) **The Delphic Priesthood.**—The second reason whereby we may account for the extraordinary influence exercised by the Oracle must, we think, be sought in the character of the men who had the direction of affairs. True, the priests did not deliver the Oracle, but they interpreted it. The method of procedure is well known. The medium through whom Apollo proclaimed “the counsel of Zeus” was a woman, the Pythia, who, after drinking of the sacred Castalian fount and eating a leaf of the sacred laurel, took her seat on a tripod over a chasm in the earth, which exhaled an intoxicating vapour.<sup>1</sup> Under the influence of this vapour the Pythia delivered the answer in broken words, which were caught by the priest in attendance, and re-rendered to the inquirer in hexameters, as a dark but sufficiently coherent utterance. To the Oracle itself was sometimes added a simple explanation in prose. The Oracle, therefore, was really in the hands of the priests as much as of the Pythia, and all depended on the good faith of both.

That the Delphic College in the early times of which we write was led by men of enlightenment, men who really had the best interests of Greece at heart, is clear from three very simple facts:—

(1) Amongst the oldest and best authenticated Oracles are those given to Lycurgus, about 825 B.C., perhaps earlier. These are couched, not in the local Delphic, but in the Ionic dialect, the language of the Epos (Bergk, i. 469), a proof that the men at the helm in Delphi had already recognised the vast importance of the Homeric poems.

(2) The so-called “Rhētra” (or saying) of Lycurgus, which contains the groundwork of the Spartan constitution (preserved for us by Plutarch) (*Lycurg.*, 6; *Adv. Colot.*, 17), is believed to be not a law enacted by Lycurgus himself, but an explanation added to the Oracle by the head of the College at Delphi (Bergk, i. 419). If this be so, then a great light is thrown on the secret of the influence of Delphi, for this Rhētra—not only the oldest prose “monument” of Greece, but, as Duncker well calls it (i. p. 381), “the oldest record of Greek history, the most ancient record of a constitution known to any history”—makes provision that the people shall be summoned month by month, “for the PEOPLE shall have the decision and the power.” The people, as we know

<sup>1</sup> This chasm is no longer visible; it was closed probably by one of the many earthquakes which have visited Delphi.

from Homer, had already the right of attending the assembly (p. 273), but here is provision made (1) for the regular convening of such assemblies—the time is not left to the caprice of the ruler; (2) for the right of discussion—the people may say Nay, nay! as well as Yea, yea! and (3) for what follows upon the right of discussion, the right of final decision. These three great steps in political freedom are either demanded for, or in any case secured to, the people by the Oracle.

(3) This same Rhetra begins with the command that a temple shall be built to Zeus Hellanios and Athena Hellenia, probably the earliest mention in existence of the Hellenic name—a proof that the Delphic authorities were alive to the necessity of uniting the numerous and often antagonistic communities and races of Greece under one common national standard.

Putting, then, these three factors together—(1) the adoption of the tone and language of the Epos, a step which implies acquaintance with Homer and all his grand ideals; (2) the declaration concerning the rights of the people; (3) the raising of the Hellenic banner above the petty race jealousies on every side—taking these as the general indications of the Delphic “policy,” it is not difficult to understand why the Hellenes turned to Delphi in all their difficulties. The growing yearning for the beautiful, for political freedom, for the mutual recognition of a common brotherhood—all these aspirations were carefully fostered and advanced by the Delphic College. The priests were, according to their light, true leaders of the people, and as fresh light came they used it—witness the adoption of the best-known sayings of the seven wise men: “Know thyself!” “Nothing too much!” which were engraven on the entrance to the temple.

*The Influence of the Oracle.*—Delphi lay in the heart of Greece, and it was believed to be the centre, not only of Greece, but of the world. Golden eagles marked the spot, the *omphalos*, where (according to the myth) two eagles sent out by Zeus, and flying from east and west, had simultaneously arrived in Delphi. Whatever we may think of the myth, there is no doubt that Delphi was for some 300 years and more the centre, religious and political, of Hellas.

As to the political side, it is evident that when the Amphictyony or Great League chose Delphi for one of its biennial sessions the readers of thought in Delphi must have come into close contact with the representatives of all the States included in the League. Probably, also, the priests received as guest-friends distinguished men from abroad, and were themselves in touch with every source whence information likely to be useful (as in seeking fresh ground for settlements) could be obtained. Hence, says Welcker, in directing as to the founding of colonies, in arbitrating between the rival factions in different States, in deciding questions as to the beginning or carrying on of war, or the perplexities caused by famine and pestilence, in the sanctioning of constitutions and laws, in laying down ethical principles for the guidance of individuals as well as of States—in all these varied directions the influence of Delphi was as great as in matters purely religious (Welcker, ii. 17).

Delphi was self-governing, and, like Delos and Olympia, sacred ground. Of its wealth we can form some estimate from the number of the temple-slaves dedicated to Apollo, either as a tithe of the captives taken in war, or by private individuals, who vied with one another in their munificence. So numerous were the slaves that whole colonies were sent out from Delphi. In this way alone Delphi worked beneficently, for the “slaves of the god” were really freemen. Again, many of the gifts presented at Delphi were works of art, the very flower of each period. Altogether, “the whole institution as it existed in the height of its prosperity, in its extent, splendour, and order,



under the direction of high dignitaries, the priestly College, and officers discharging various functions, Pytho, as it stood on the steep slope of Parnassus, crowned, through the generosity of the Athenian Alemæonidæ, by one of the grandest and most beautiful of temples, thronged by a concourse of men from all districts, formed even in outward aspect one of the most extraordinary phenomena of Hellas; Delphi was not unworthy to be the centre of its religious and political relations" (Welcker, ii. 13).

*Was the Oracle a Deception?*—We now come to a question which underlies every other concerning the Oracle. The utterances delivered may be classed under three heads:—

1. Plain straightforward warnings, such as that given to Glaucus (p. 322).
2. Oracles which admit of a double interpretation.

As an example we may take the Oracle given to the Lydian Cræsus, that "if he should make war on the Persians he would destroy a mighty empire" (Herodotus, i. 53). Cræsus understands that the fall is to be that of Persia, whereas it is his own empire that suffers.

3. Such Oracles as the foregoing might, perhaps, be given by any clear-headed, thoughtful observer of events. There is, however, a third class of Oracle, which cannot be referred to human sagacity—Oracles which foretold the future, and which were often fulfilled in a very remarkable way.

The strictly prophetic Oracles are much fewer in number than is generally supposed, the greater part of the Pythian utterances consisting merely of counsel for the guidance of affairs, political and private. Still, prophetic utterances are on record, and although some of these may have been invented after the event it will not do, as Bergk points out (i. 331), to carry scepticism too far. Thucydides tells us (v. 26), *e.g.*, that the duration of the Peloponnesian War as thrice nine years had been predicted beforehand, though not by the Pythia.

To what influence, then, is the Oracle to be attributed? The early fathers of the Church believed the Oracle to have been inspired by demoniacal agency; it was the fashion of the last century to denounce the whole organisation as a huge deception practised by the priests. At the present day we do not think either explanation will be deemed satisfactory.

We of the present day are disposed, at any rate, to lay aside pre-judgments, and try to put ourselves in the position of the men of the ancient world, in order that we may, as far as possible, look at what concerns them from their own standpoint. Viewed in the light of the *pselaphan*—the groping towards the light—the Oracle does not present any absolutely insoluble difficulty. Five facts must be kept in mind:—

1. It is impossible to imagine that a shrewd, thinking people like the Greeks could have been deceived for centuries (Cicero, *De Divin.*, i. 19, 38; ii. 57).

2. The Oracle was revered by men of the intellectual calibre of Pindar, Æschylus, Sophocles, Socrates, Plato.

3. In Cicero's day nothing could have fallen lower than the Oracle, yet Cicero says that unless we overturn all history the Oracle must at one time have been true, and that for centuries.

4. The testimony of history is that during its "true" period the Oracle was a great educative power, true to its motto of moderation in all things, in the midst of the Greek people. Without such a strong, central, mediating authority, which could be appealed to as arbitrator, the numerous little States—all free and independent—must have devoured one another, or been themselves rent in pieces by internal faction. Thus the working out of the various

experiments—intellectual, philosophical, artistic, political—by which Greece educated the later world would have been, humanly speaking, impossible.

5. The Greeks, and the Greeks alone among the Aryan nations, possessed the Oracle. The Romans themselves came to inquire at Delphi. The Oracle seems to have been in some way bound up with the unique historical position of the Greek nation as the leader of the Aryan peoples.

Taking all these facts into consideration, is not this a case for the application of the MASTER's rule: "By their fruits ye shall know them"? In so far as the Delphic Oracle was true to the *pselaphan*, the seeking after God, to the great unwritten laws, to the noblest instincts of the Greek nation, just in so far, doubtless, did the Oracle succeed in "touching" God, just so far did it become, as in the case of Homer, an instrument in the hands of Him who could make use of any and every human agency for the furtherance of His plan, the preparation of the nations.

Can we imagine a Pindar, or a Socrates, or an Aristides surnamed the Just—the man whose aim was "to be, and not to seem"—going up to Delphi with pure and humble heart, to inquire of the Oracle; can we imagine any of these as being repulsed by the Great Father, because he prayed "O Zeus!" or "O Apollo!" instead of "O Jehovah"? Impossible. "Doubtless Thou art our Father," could each one say, "though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not."<sup>1</sup>

Then came a time when the Pythia sank to be a tool in the hand of Sparta—a time when she fell lower still, and, as Demosthenes averred, "philippised," set herself against the freedom of Hellas. From the moment of the first defection, although its usefulness for a time did not cease, the fall of the Oracle was certain. Even the Homeric Greeks could have foretold this. The Invisible Justice would be "no helper of liars."

*Ancient Prophecy: The Sibyl.*—In connection with the predictions of the Oracle, we may briefly glance here at the great prophecy of the Erythrean Sibyl concerning the advent of a glorious King who is to reign in righteousness. This prediction has been generally received by the Christian Church as a Gentile prophecy flowing concurrently with the Jewish announcements concerning the Messiah, and "mounting like these to a common source."

The prediction is ascribed to the Erythrean Sibyl, who was honoured by all antiquity—not only by Phrygia, Greece, and Rome, but by Persia, Babylon, Egypt, and Libya—as its prophetess; and as such, as the proclaimer of Messiah among the Gentiles, the Sibyl has her place also in the Christian Church.

She was born, not in Hellas, but on ground early Hellenised, at Marpessus, in a glen of Mount Ida in the Troad, the district made famous by Homer. In the time of Solon and Cyrus (the sixth century B.C.) the Sibylline Oracles were collected in the temple of Apollo at Gergis, whence they passed successively to Erythræ, Cumæ in Italy, and Rome.

As Canon Mozley well observes (*Ruling Ideas*, p. 18), prophecy was treated differently in the "regular" and the "irregular" channels through which it flowed. To the Jews the anticipation of Messiah's coming became their greatest treasure, whereas the nations, the Gentiles, did not know what to make of it. "In paganism it was only a sweet sound," and remained unheeded until Virgil thought fit to present it in his Fourth Eclogue as a courtly compliment to his friend and patron, C. Asinius Pollio. The golden age of mankind is to begin with the childhood of the nobleman's son and heir.

The Sibylline Oracles are not to be received *in toto* as a genuine Greek

<sup>1</sup> Isa. lxxiii. 16.



work, for the collection was seriously tampered with by the Alexandrian Jews. It is the opinion, however, of Klausen, who has made an investigation of the subject (*Æneas u. die Penaten*, p. 290 et seq.), that "the correspondence between Virgil and the Judaised version is not such as to make it at all probable that Virgil had the work of the Jews before him. We can infer that a similar passage existed in the Erythrean collection, and that the poet had read this."

While the greater part of the so-called "Oracles," therefore, must be dismissed as, to say the least, doubtful, there still remains the passage to which Virgil for his own purposes has borne testimony, and which may be accepted as a genuine and a very beautiful witness to the longing of the ancient world for the Desire of all Nations.<sup>1</sup> Translated from the Greek version, the prophecy runs thus:—

"And then shall He raise up an eternal Kingdom over all men, when He shall have given a holy law to the pious, to all of whom He hath promised to open the earth and the world and the gates of the blessed, and all joys, and immortal intelligence, and everlasting delight. And from every land they shall bring frankincense and gifts to the mansions of the Mighty God" (*Sibyll.*, iii. 766).

It is exceedingly characteristic that "immortal intelligence" (*nous athanatos*) is one of the promised blessings. Contrast this with the Homeric picture of the departed—in which his real ego, his *nous*, is lost to the shade—and we think the genuineness of the prophecy, as given to the Greeks, is placed beyond doubt. The promise of intelligence that cannot die corresponds to an aspiration essentially Hellenic.

## RISE OF THE GREAT FESTIVALS

The holding of high festivals in honour of the immortals was not by any means a practice confined to Greece, but with the Hellenes it attained a maximum of importance equalled among no other people of antiquity. Every city, every village had its festival; and the great national gatherings probably grew out of the custom of sending deputations (*theoriæ*) from one place to another to assist at these local festivals in offering the sacrifice, and to be spectators (*theoroi*) of the festivities—sacred games or contests of skill—which followed. Some of these local festivals were in later times of exceeding importance and splendour, as the Panathenæa and the Dionysia at Athens, the Eleusinia at Eleusis, the Carneia and Hyacinthia at Sparta. Four festivals, however, stand out with prominence among the rest as Pan-Hellenic, belonging to all the Hellenes—these are the Olympic, Pythian, Nemean, and Isthmian festivals.

For all details concerning these the reader is referred to the companion volume. We must premise here, however, for the sake of clearness that—

(1) The Olympic festival was held in honour of Zeus at Olympia, on the banks of the Alpheius (in Elis) every fifth year. The games lasted four days, and the prize was a wreath of wild olive.

(2) The Pythian festival was held in honour of Apollo at Delphi every four years. The prize was a wreath of laurel.

(3) The Nemean festival was held in honour of Zeus in the valley of Nemea (in Argeia in Peloponnesus) every two years. The prize was a wreath of parsley.

<sup>1</sup> On this expression (Desire of all Nations) see, however, T. T. Perowne on Haggai ii. 7.

(4) The Isthmian festival was held in honour of Poseidon on the Corinthian Isthmus every two years. The prize was a wreath of wild pine or of parsley.

Thus two out of the four festivals were celebrated in honour of the father of gods and men; one in honour of the interpreter of his will, Apollo; the fourth in honour of the stormy ruler of the deep, Poseidon. These four games, all held in or near Peloponnesus—one in each year—formed the period, or sacred cycle of games. He who had gained a victory in each was called *Periodonikes* (Grote, *Hist.*, iii. 291).

Amongst them by far the most important, as well as most ancient, is the Olympic festival. It supplied the oldest chronological record of Hellas, for the Greeks computed time by the Olympiads, or periods of four years between each festival. The first Olympiad is the year 776 B.C., when for the first time the Eleians inscribed the name of the victor in the games. Corebus, the Eleian, winner in the foot-race, heads the long list of victors, whose names were regularly entered in an official list at the festival in each recurring fifth year. Hence, in more ways than by splendour alone, the Olympic games answer to Pindar's comparison of them to the "quickeningsun."

Next in importance is the Pythian festival, which was inaugurated 586 B.C. The Nemean and Isthmian games are of later date.

The Olympic games were confined to athletic contests, hence Delphi had one distinct advantage over Olympia, in that here music and poetry were included among the trials of skill, as was natural in a festival held in honour of the leader of the Muses. In this the example of Delphi was followed at Nemea and on the Isthmus. Even at Olympia, however, the council chamber at Elis seems to have been given up to recitations and the reading of new works (Paus., vi. 23, 5). Here it was probably that, according to the tradition, Herodotus gave the famous reading of his History which inspired the boy Thucydides. Whether this particular story be true or not, there can be no doubt that new works were often first "published" at the great games, and that, as Bishop Thirlwall well remarks (i. 446), the concourse of listeners served the same purpose, so far as criticism and the diffusion of thought are concerned, as the modern press.

Such then were the great games. Viewed simply in the light of a national bond, these four Pan-Hellenic festivals exercised an influence which can hardly be exaggerated. As we know, the nature of the land, which led to the splitting up of the Greeks into numberless little independent communities, was not favourable to anything like national sentiment or unity. But at Olympia, at Delphi, at Nemea, on the Isthmus, the various Hellenic races met to sacrifice in common to Zeus, to Apollo, or to Poseidon. The motive which drew them together was in its origin a religious one. During the great Olympic festival war ceased, the "truce of the god" was proclaimed throughout the land by heralds crowned with garlands; enmities and jealousies were laid aside for the time being, the worshippers learned to know each other as brethren, and to throw off, to a certain extent, the distrust engendered by isolation.

And not only was the national bond between the States of European Greece strengthened, but also the bond between the mother-country and her colonies, for participation in the national festivals and the games was open to all Hellenes, whether of Europe, Asia, or Africa. "Barbarians" alone were excluded.

In yet another sense, also, were these games of great importance. They not only kept alive the sentiment of national unity, but they were invaluable



as preservers of the peace. That inordinate thirst for glory which spurred on the Hellenes in all their experiments would probably also have spurred them on to their destruction but for the safety-valve afforded by the games. In these, State could rival State, city vie with city, in generous and friendly emulation, the good Eris of Hesiod, without being impelled to test its prowess by aid of the other Eris, the strife which calls for the arbitrament of arms. From the sacred games a man might peacefully win the "longed-for glory" (Pindar, *Ol.*, viii. 64), gain laurels for himself and his city, in the presence of thousands of spectators, and his name be known far and wide throughout Hellas.

These laurels, moreover, were won for the city or State by the energy of her own sons in their private capacity, thus affording the most glorious hope (according to the notions of the age) for the development of the individual. For the glory of the Olympic games, says Pindar, "there is striving of swift feet and of strong bodies brave to labour; but he that overcometh hath for the sake of those games a sweet tranquillity throughout his life for evermore" (*Ol.*, i. 155). The "sweet tranquillity" is, of course, the calm of a laudable ambition fully satisfied. The garland and the acclamations of the multitude were not the only rewards that awaited the victor. So highly was the effort necessary for success valued—as being a real training of body and mind in endurance<sup>1</sup>—that by the laws of Solon any Athenian winning an Olympic prize received 500 drachmas (a sum equal to one year's income of the highest class, according to Solon's division of the citizens) and was entertained at the public cost by the magistrates in the Prytaneium. In Sparta the honour conferred was of nobler quality, inasmuch as to the victor was assigned a conspicuous post on the battlefield.

Again, the games were based on the strictest equality; the poorest citizen might win a triumph for his mother-city in the athletic contests—running, leaping, throwing the quoit, hurling the javelin, wrestling; the rich could do no more by the most lavish expenditure in the chariot-race.

Thus, by promoting national unity, by affording opportunity for healthy emulation, and by practically levelling distinctions based merely on birth and wealth, the games appealed to many Hellenic ideals, and, in their own way, helped on the making of Hellas. Naturally, and as was to be expected, the games, like every other human institution, fell away from the first ideal. Naturally, they tended to become, more and more, mere exhibitions of strength by professional athletes. Nevertheless, in the true Hellenic period, the period when a Pindar could regard the setting forth of the victor's fame as an object worthy of his genius, we shall strangely misunderstand the whole organisation, festival and games, if we do not realise that *both* were permeated by deep religious feeling. We can only enter into the spirit of Pindar when we picture to ourselves the winner at Olympia on the night of his triumph, crowned with the sacred olive, escorted triumphantly by his comrades to the blazing altar of Zeus, and there—beneath "the lovely shining of the fair-faced moon," in the presence of the immense throng of spectators from all parts of the civilised world—sacrificing and returning thanks to the god who had given him the victory. "Forget not!" was Pindar's counsel to a victor in the Pythian games, Arkesilas, king of Cyrene—"Forget not, whilst thy praise is sung at Cyrene, to set God above every other as the cause thereof!" (*Pyth.*, v. 30).

<sup>1</sup> In this sense the games often afforded metaphors to St. Paul.

## III.—RISE OF THE PEOPLE

To trace the gradual development of the power of the people in Greece, would be, of course, to describe the greater part of the Greek experiments in politics. We can, therefore, only offer here one or two generalisations which, without trespassing on another branch of our subject, may help us to bridge over the gulf between society as depicted in Homer and the state of things in which the writers of the classical period found themselves.

(1) First, then, let us note that the Greeks were essentially a "self-organising" people. They could be content neither with the one-man rule of the East, nor the wild licence of the barbarians of the North. They recognised even in Homer's day, as we have seen, the value of discipline; but it became more and more evident that the discipline must proceed from within as well as from without. The Greek love of order demanded law, and the Greek love of freedom demanded a share in making the laws by which the individual as well as the community was to be bound.

(2) These two "instincts," love of order and love of freedom, combined to turn the Greek, before all things, into a citizen, and to turn the city into an independent, self-governing community. In a city which was also a State, existing by and for itself, the Greek could realise both aspirations, whereas whether merged in an empire, or left to the unfettered liberty of the mountaineer, such aspirations would have been lost (*cf.* Freeman, "The Athen. Democracy," *Historical Essays*, ii. p. 116 *et seq.*). This civil and constitutional freedom, the ideal of all Greeks, was attained fully only in Athens; but it existed to a certain extent, more or less, in all the city States, independent and autonomous, which sprang up everywhere in Hellas proper and the colonies.

(3) Of the two motive-powers, the love of order was in earliest times the more keenly felt. The kings were hedged about by right divine, and probably the people did not begin to clamour for their "rights" until existing rights had been taken from them and replaced by wrongs. Then began a gradual awakening, as Mr. Grote puts it (ii. p. 386; Hume, *Works*, i. p. 159, ed. 1760), a demand "for something like a constitution, as Hume calls it—a government of laws, not of men."

The monarchy fell, and everywhere throughout Greece it seems to have been followed by an aristocracy. The nobles who had formed the council of the king (as in Homer) succeeded to his power, which they retained, probably, until they forgot the objects for which the power had been entrusted to them, and trampled too heavily on the shoulders of the patient little old man, Demos. How the patricians regarded the plebeians is pretty plainly shown in the verses of Theognis, the Megarian poet, who flourished in the sixth century B.C. By him the adjectives "good" and "bad" are used in a way that speaks for itself. By a Homer and a Hesiod these words are applied in the sense which they convey to ourselves. It was left for this banished aristocrat and those who thought with him to find out that "agathos" and "esthlos," good and excellent, mean noble by birth; "kakos" and "deilos," bad and base, poor by birth.

The disputes between nobles and commoners generally ended in the seizure of the supreme authority by a "tyrant," not necessarily a hard or cruel man, but a usurper, who held down both parties, and was himself only checkmated and thrust out of power by the joint action of the former disputants, thus paving the way for democracy, the government of Demos, the sovereign people.



(4) In Sparta and Epeirus alone did the monarchy continue to flourish; but in Sparta the government was in reality, despite its two kings, a veiled oligarchy, for the power was in the hands of the ephors, officers chosen for the very purpose of keeping the kings in check.

(5) When the great tragic poets of Athens wrote, they wrote for a free people—a people who had attained to freedom by three great steps, each preceded by that pioneer and test of true progress—suffering (Freeman, *op. cit.*).

(a) The first step was the legislation of Solon, expressly designed to alleviate existing misery. By it every Athenian citizen obtained an equal vote in the *ecclesia* or public assembly, which elected the yearly senate and the yearly archons or magistrates. The people themselves were not eligible for office—they could not yet make the laws; but they now chose those who ruled them, and they called their rulers to an account at the termination of the year of office.

(b) Then succeeded another period of endurance, the tyranny of Peisistratus, which proved indirectly a benefit, inasmuch as it united the citizens in one common cause, the desire to throw off the yoke of a common bondage. When the tyranny was overpassed, as Mr. Freeman puts it, the old order of things, the old distinctions, could not be restored. Cleisthenes founded his new legislation upon a wider and more comprehensive basis than the old constitution; many resident foreigners and slaves received the franchise for the first time; the old barriers between patrician and plebeian were swept away, and the archonship was thrown open to all with a certain qualification of wealth—to all, that is, but the poorest class.

(c) Another period of suffering approaches—this time intense and agonising—the Persian invasion. When this, the greatest tyranny, was overpassed, the Athenians were united as one man; the distinction between rich and poor had vanished for the time. After the battle of Platea any Athenian of unstained character (by legislation attributed to Aristides the just) was eligible for office in the State.

(d) Finally, the days of Pericles witnessed the installation of the full-grown Demos into all kingly honours. He had only taken a little over a hundred years to come to political maturity. Henceforth, Demos held in his own hands all power—legislative, executive, judicial—and the way in which he used his power forms not the least interesting of Greek experiments.

## THE SEVEN WISE MEN: THE GNOMIC POETS

Contemporaneously with the rise of the people, the beginnings of political thought, are the beginnings of philosophy. The sixth century is the age of the “seven wise men” of Greece—the age, that is, when the proverbial philosophy, of which we saw examples in Hesiod, became universal. Its roots, indeed, lay far deeper than Hesiod or even than Homer, for the love of pithy sayings, maxims which express much in little, was widespread among the Greek people.

The term *gnome*, by which such maxims were designated, is itself an example of those curious double or triple significations which Greek words sometimes carry. *Gnome* is first the judgment, the operating mind itself, and then it becomes the result of the mental operation—opinion.<sup>1</sup> Hence the *gnomæ* of the wise men literally expressed their “mind.”

<sup>1</sup> *Gnome* expresses also will and inclination, thus blending the moral and intellectual, as in *eidenai*, *boulē*, and *boulomai*, &c. (see *ante*, p. 267).

Who these wise men were precisely, whether they were seven, ten, or more in number, whether they ever uttered the sentiments ascribed to them, are doubtful points. It is more than probable that sayings which had grown up unconsciously, as it were, among the people, and which fully represented the national "mind," were brought together in later years, and deepened in importance by being ascribed to national sages. The legend concerning the wise men tells us that a golden tripod drawn out of the sea, and found to be inscribed with the words "To the wisest," was offered to each, and declined by each in turn, when it was finally dedicated to Apollo. The names generally received are those of Thales of Miletus, the founder of "physical" philosophy, Bias of Priene, Pittacus of Mitylene, Periander of Corinth, Cleobulus of Lindus, Cheilon of Lacedæmon, and Solon of Athens. The selection is, to say the least, curious, seeing that it includes such a man as Periander, tyrant of Corinth, the perpetrator of many revolting atrocities, amongst others the murder of his own wife (Herodotus, iii. 50; v. 92, 7).

Taking the names as they stand, however, they are those of men engaged in the active business of life, and distinguished as statesmen, legislators, and generals. The maxims attributed to them—"Know thyself"; "Nothing too much"; "Know thy opportunity"; "Suretyship is the precursor of ruin"—are the outcome of practical wisdom. "Know thyself" was inscribed on the front of the Delphic temple.

The wise men may not have been "philosophers" in the modern sense, but their maxims lie at the root of Greek philosophy. "Nothing too much" and "Moderation is best" passed into something new in the *metriotês* of Aristotle, and "Know thyself" became the very keynote of the teaching of Socrates (cf. Grant, *Ethics*, i. p. 92).

*The Gnostic or Moralising Poets.*—Among the gnostic poets who moralised on human life and its vicissitudes we must notice especially—(1) one of the wise men, Solon of Athens, and (2) Theognis of Megara.

All that we know of the first, Solon, shows us a very noble nature, alive to the injustice and the hardships that pressed upon the Athenian populace, and setting himself with perfect disinterestedness to remedy them. He is asked by the State to legislate, and his own friends advise him to make himself tyrant. The people would have welcomed him in this character, but he declines to entertain the suggestion; and, says Plutarch (*Solon*), his friends "chid him as a madman for refusing to haul up the net when the fishes were enmeshed." Solon's uprightness, however, was proof against the temptation.

The justice and moderation of the man are well shown in his own account of the spirit in which he endeavoured to remedy existing abuses (Grote).

Solon stands out as the type of a noble, God-fearing Athenian of the old school. The story of his interview with Cræsus, the Lydian king—his warning the monarch that "no man can be called happy while he lives"—whether true or only *ben trovato*, is one of the most beautiful incidents related by Herodotus (i. 30 *et seq.*).

A very different character is presented to us when we turn to Theognis, who flourished somewhat later (see *State of Megara*).

Both Solon and Theognis live in a time of great agitation, when the peace of the community is rent by parties contending for the supreme power, and the most violent measures are resorted to on either side. No contrast, however, could be greater than the manner in which the two meet the storm—Solon embracing the cause of the weaker, and yet earning by impartiality the confidence of both sides; Theognis forced to fly, and in his exile



peevishly lamenting his hard fate, and thirsting to drink the blood of his enemies.

Yet Theognis is by no means devoid of right and good feeling. Many of his sentiments might have emanated from a Hesiod or from Solon himself. His maxims are addressed to Cynrus, a young friend, and much of the advice given is excellent. Theognis is behind no one in inculcating the duty of reverencing Zeus and the gods, although he cannot understand why the same fate should overtake the just and the unjust. Parents are to be warmly loved and cherished; for those who dishonour parents growing old, there is, he says emphatically, "no place" (Theognis, 819)—a sentiment which may be compared with the promise attached to our fifth commandment. Justice is with Theognis, as with Homer, the all-embracing virtue: the just man is the good man (Theognis, 147). Gratitude, moderation in all things, endurance, are enforced again and again, together with the necessity of caution in choosing friends, and in avoiding the use of "big words," *i.e.* boasting, "for no one knoweth what a night or a day may bring about for a man" (Theognis, 159 *et seq.*).

Hence, we cannot be surprised that the maxims of Theognis should have been favourites among all classes, and used in the instruction of the young, nor yet to find many of them quoted with approval.

Nevertheless, Theognis is answerable for some of the confusion in morals which sprang up later, for there is another side to his character—a hard, bitter side. He has been deprived of his property, and banished by the "bad and base," *i.e.* the commoners of Megara, who have gained the upper hand; and when he thinks of his mother-city in possession of those who, erewhile, lodged without, clad in goat-skins, he gives utterance to sentiments which found only too loud and ready an echo amidst the tumults of rival factions. "Flatter your enemy," he says, "and when you have got him into your power, wreak your vengeance on him, and don't spare!" (Theognis, 363 *et seq.*). He himself sees no prospect of taking revenge on those who have seized his property by force. Might it but be given him to drink their black blood!—may some god but grant him this! (Theognis, 349). The following is his cynical advice to the party in power (Theognis, 345 *et seq.*; Frere's trans., *Frag.*, xvii.):—

"Lash your obedient rabble! lash and load  
The burden on their backs! Spurn them and goad!  
They'll bear it all; by patience and by birth,  
The most submissive, humble slaves on earth!"

Moreover, Theognis is very inconsistent. At one time he is prepared to meet poverty with the bravest of hearts—this is the mark of the noble, to bear in silence; at another, he accuses poverty, seated on his shoulders, as teaching him many disgraceful acts against his will and his own better knowledge (Theognis, 441, 649). Theognis, in short, himself resembles too much the polypus which he commends to the imitation of Cynrus (Theognis, 218), the boneless creature that takes its colour from the rock to which it attaches itself. He himself is wanting in "backbone," his wisdom is to some extent versatility, and his contradictions go far to explain Plato's denunciations of the poets. We may take leave of him with his often-quoted lines on the misery of existence (Theognis, 425 *et seq.*):—

"Not to be born—never to see the sun—  
No worldly blessing is a greater one!  
And the next best is speedily to die,  
And lapt beneath a load of earth to lie!"

The misery of human life is dilated on by all Greek writers, from Homer downwards, so Theognis is not singular in his experiences. But contrast these lines with the manly words of Solon to the poet Mimnermus, who had expressed his wish for a painless death at the age of sixty. "Alter the words," said the noble man, "and sing: May the fate of death reach me in my eightieth year!" And death, so it is said, did reach Solon in his eightieth year, still "on guard," protesting against the usurpation of the tyrant.

## RISE OF PHILOSOPHY

We must now leave the mother-country for a brief space, and return to those daughter-settlements which, as we know, for a while outstripped her in the race. By their commercial enterprise and indefatigable use of every opportunity, the Greeks of the colonies had early attained to that degree of affluence which admits of leisure on the part of some at least of the community, and it is characteristic of the Hellenes that their word for "leisure" is that from which we, through the Latin, derive our word "school." *Scholē* in its essence means ease, a halt from toil,<sup>1</sup> and in this sense it appears for the first time in the pages of Herodotus. How the Greeks employed their "ease" is shown by the development of the word: in the time of Plato and Aristotle *scholē* had come to mean a learned discussion or lecture. This fact in itself might suffice to show us what manner of people we have to do with. Possession of ease amongst the Persians meant opportunity for "plotting"; among the Phœnicians, "time for sensual enjoyment." Only among the Hellenes did it mean "change of work." Those who had rest from the work of the body threw themselves with fervour into other work—the work of the brain and mind. Such work in its noblest form—that of meditation and contemplation of the highest things—is Aristotle's *summum bonum*: he can conceive of no greater happiness than contemplation, even for God (Arist., *Ethik.*, X. viii. 7).<sup>2</sup> He maintains elsewhere that science, in its purely theoretic aspect, arose first where (*Metaphys.*, I. i. 981, c. 23) people were free from the pressing anxieties of life—where they enjoyed, that is, what some amongst ourselves would also designate one of the greatest blessings of life—leisure to think, time to work out their thoughts. One of the first fruits of Greek leisure was undoubtedly the epic in its artistic form—the Homeric poems; the next (from about the middle of the sixth century B.C.) is—philosophy. Both arose, as we know, among that people of irrepressible energy and *Schwung*—the Ionians; from them the impulse or inspiration passed to the Dorians and to the Athenians.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Scholē* is probably derived from the root of *echēin* = to stop (L. and S.)

<sup>2</sup> It is probably in this connection that we must understand Aristotle's defence of slavery; as an institution it set the philosopher free to devote himself to the higher life.

<sup>3</sup> Of the twelve most celebrated early philosophers, seven at least were natives of Ionia—*Thales*, *Anaximander*, and *Anaximenes* of Miletus, *Xenophanes* of Colophon, *Heracleitus* of Ephesus, *Pythagoras* of Samos, *Anaxagoras* of Clazomenæ. *Xenophanes* assisted in founding the Ionian colony of Elea (Velia) in Southern Italy, and here arose the Eleian school of philosophy and its two great exponents, *Parmenides* and *Zeno*. *Pythagoras* carried the sacred fire to Crotona, a Dorian colony in Southern Italy; *Anaxagoras*, to Athens. *Empedocles* was a native of Agrigentum in Sicily, a Dorian colony; *Democritus*, of Abdera in Thrace, an Ionian colony. The birthplace of *Leucippus* is unknown.

It is evident from the foregoing that the impetus to philosophic studies proceeded, directly and indirectly, from the Ionic race.

Plato has told us in the noble words which he puts into the mouth of his master in the "Theætetus" (374) that the object of philosophy is the study of *man*—what he must do and suffer—but philosophy did not begin with the study of man. It had its roots, as we have seen, in that feeling of wonder which is common to all men. The experiments of the first philosophers were directed to the nature of the world.



(1) *The Early Ionian School* included besides its founder Thales (one of the seven sages and a contemporary of Solon), Anaximander, and Anaximenes, all three natives of Miletus. These first "philosophers" were what is implied in the original meaning of the word—lovers of wisdom, that is, of knowledge generally. Philosophy included at first every branch of mental culture. To these first inquirers the term "physi-o-logists" = investigators of nature (*physis*), applied to them by Aristotle, is more strictly applicable, for it was to the great problem of the universe, how it had come into being, that they devoted their energy. On the various cosmological theories which they built up, however, we must not linger here, interesting as are these speculations (and especially those of Anaximander), for they belong properly to the Greek experiments in science. We need only say that Thales derives all things from water, Anaximenes from air, and Anaximander, standing midway between the two, from "the infinite"—a term which does not denote any incorporeal substance, as one is apt to suppose, but merely primitive matter in an "infinite" chaos—holding in itself as it were the seeds of all things—out of which all things separated and took shape. The early Ionian philosophers do not seem, however, to have advanced beyond the polytheistic conceptions of their day, for Thales is reported to have said that the world is "full of gods," meaning thereby, doubtless, divine forces, the forces of nature, which the popular notions had personified (Arist., *De An.*, I. v. 411, a. 7; Zeller, *Prehist. Philos.*, i. pp. 221, 222). Anaximander, again, regarded the stars as gods, and spoke of an "infinite number of heavenly gods"—meaning thereby the heavenly bodies (Cic., *N.D.*, i. 10, 25; Zeller, p. 255).

(2) *The Pythagoreans*.—If the early Ionian school had nothing of value to tell the world concerning the Divine, the religious teaching of the next school, founded by Pythagoras, surpasses in importance all that had been thought out since Homer. Pythagoras represents the turning-point between the old and the new beliefs of antiquity. And yet, almost all that is known of his own teaching with certainty lies in the two sayings which are universally attributed to him:—

"Follow God!"

"To be like God is the end"—i.e. the *telos* or aim of life (Iambl., v. *Pyth.*, 137; Stob., *Erl. Eth.*, 2, 6, 3; cf. Schmidt, *Ethik*, i. 377, note 3).

These two sayings, and their practical application to everyday life by the Pythagorean school or brotherhood, worked like "an electric shock" on all who were able to receive them; for, rightly understood, they contain an entire reversal of many of the popular beliefs.

"Follow which god?" an inquirer might ask. "What care the Olympians for us men, now that the generation of the heroes is past and gone? Be like God? How is this possible? Wherein lies the difference between the gods and myself, except in their supernatural powers and their immortality? To these I cannot attain."

It is clear, therefore, that Pythagoras meant something very different from the popular belief, although, be it noted, he did not break with polytheism. His teaching is closely connected with that of the Delphic Oracle. The god who is to be followed is Apollo, he who in Delphi proclaims the counsels of the Supreme Being; the likeness to be aimed at is conformity to the purity of the god—it is to be attained by self-discipline, self-knowledge. In accordance with the famous motto inscribed on the front of the Delphic temple, "Know thyself!" each disciple is to examine himself strictly day after day by the often-quoted formula:—

“Wherein have I failed? what accomplished? what neglected?” (Diog. L., 8, 22; Plut., *M.*, 168 b, 515 f; cf. Schmidt, *Ethik*, ii. 395, note 3).

It is also certain that Pythagoras taught (although he was probably not the first to introduce) the doctrine of the transmigration of souls (cf. Zeller and Alleyne, i. 481)—the belief that after death the soul passed into the body of another human being or of an animal, in order to undergo punishment for sins committed during life. This doctrine, afterwards adopted by Plato, is closely connected with that of purification. Life is the season for this discipline, men are “the property of the gods”; the soul is enclosed by them within the body as in a prison-house, for the express purpose of purification and expiation; hence, it is not lawful to try to escape from the trials of life by suicide—another idea worked out by Plato. It is also recorded of Pythagoras that he repudiated the name of “sage”; men can only struggle towards wisdom by the help of God; hence he called himself, not “sage,” not absolutely “wise,” but a “lover” of wisdom, a philosophos. “Men will be best,” he said, “when they go to the gods.” Here is a third of the Platonic doctrines, which may, we think, justly be traced back either to the mysteries or to the teaching of Pythagoras; but with these three—the doctrine of transmigration, of purification in connection with it, of the going to the gods as the time of human perfection—we must stop. If we are to believe all that late writers tell us about Pythagoras and his teaching, there would be little of originality left in the doctrines either of Plato or of Aristotle.

The two sayings first quoted are in themselves quite enough to account for his influence. When we reflect that hitherto the Greek conception of the Divine had been the Homeric, as we have learned to know it—the notion that, while the gods represented the invisible justice, they themselves were free from moral obligation—the advance made is at once apparent. The Delphic Oracle had begun the salutary reform by insisting, from the example of the god himself, on the necessity of purification from blood-guilt (p. 322); Pythagoras carries it on by recognising the necessity of purity throughout the whole of life. The Divine Being requires purity in those who would approach Him. He does take an interest in men and their progress towards the Divine; He wishes them to “follow” Him.

We have said that Pythagoras upheld the old polytheism. Nevertheless this one doctrine of purity so altered the whole character of religion in his eyes that he is described as having seen (in a vision or in a descent into Hades) both Homer and Hesiod undergoing severe torments in the lower world as a punishment for what they had said about the gods (*Hieron. ap. Diog.*, 8, 21; cf. Zeller, i. p. 489). That he maintained the supremacy of Zeus as presiding over all, the observance of the great unwritten laws, of reverence towards the gods, towards parents and those in authority, harmonises with all tradition. His definition of justice as “retaliation,” or as “a square”—“good for good, evil for evil”—shows, however, that he did not, any more than the author of the *Works and Days*, rise above the spirit of antiquity.

Of the personality of Pythagoras we know little. It is noteworthy that Aristotle, who devoted several works to the philosophy of the Pythagoreans, seldom mentions Pythagoras himself, probably because the whole history of the philosophers had even in his time become hopelessly encrusted with the mythic.<sup>1</sup>

Pythagoras is generally believed to have been born about 580 B.C. in the

<sup>1</sup> Pythagoras, e.g., is said to have been a son of Apollo or of Hermes: to have had a golden thigh; to have been the only one who understood “the music of the spheres,” &c., &c. (cf. Zeller, *Pre-Socratic Philosophy*, translated by S. Alleyne, i. p. 338 ff.).



Ionian island of Samos. He is said to have travelled extensively for more than thirty years, during which time he became acquainted with the wisdom of the Egyptians, the Chaldeans, the Persian Magi, the Hindus, the Thracians, the Jews, and even the Druids of Gaul. Possibly the grain of truth in the tradition is that he had visited Egypt, but the evidence even for this is weak. Eventually he settled in Crotona, one of the most flourishing cities of Magna Græcia (Southern Italy), where his influence became unbounded. Disciples, both men and women, flocked to him, not only from the Greek colonies, but also from all parts of Italy, and the chief men of the city, so it is said, became attached to him by a vow.

The Pythagoreans formed a society apart from "the many"; their doctrines were purposely veiled in symbols, in order that knowledge of them might be confined to "the few," the initiated, who recognised each other, like our Freemasons, by secret signs. The discipline of the order was strict; unworthy candidates were rejected; members are reported to have undergone a protracted novitiate, including several years of silence, to have practised celibacy as well as abstinence from animal food, and to have had all things in common. Several of these statements are, however, contradicted—*e.g.* Pythagoras himself is said to have been married. That they ate little if any animal food is, however, extremely probable, as the doctrine of the transmigration of souls would of itself (together with the general belief of antiquity that animal food hindered the growth of spirituality) tend to restrict the diet to vegetables and fruit. The idea of any community of goods is, however, probably to be rejected.

The Pythagorean ideal of life was no apathetic withdrawal from the world. On the contrary, one of the numerous sayings ascribed to Pythagoras is: "Don't remain sitting on a *chœnix*"—*i.e.* a quart-measure. A *chœnix* was the slave's daily allowance of barley-meal, the minimum on which life could be sustained. Hence the maxim is interpreted as meaning, "Do not remain idle—put forth all thy powers," and may fitly be compared with the MASTER's injunction not to hide light under a bushel. As a matter of fact, the impulse given by Pythagoras and his school to the study of mathematics and of music, the scientific theory of sound, was hardly less powerful than that which we have been considering in the region of morals. The word *kosmos* is said to have been first used by Pythagoras to denote the beautiful order and arrangement of the universe. Whether this be so or not, there can be no doubt that the perception of order and harmony as the great law of all existence, as of all material things, lay at the root of the Pythagorean system of philosophy—the system which evolved all things out of numbers.

The same idea of law and order seems to have dominated the Pythagorean system of politics. The maintenance of authority was the all-important point. Hence the tendency of the school was towards a strong oligarchy of the Dorian type; and, as the members of the brotherhood took an active share in political life, it is probable that in this way they came into direct collision with the growing spirit of democracy and the rise of the people.

Whether the downfall of the school in Crotona is to be attributed to this cause, to the reserve and exclusiveness of the members, or to jealousy on the part of some excluded candidate, cannot with certainty be determined. Possibly all three factors were at work, for the mission of Pythagoras in the city came to a sudden end. The meeting-house of the disciples was burned down, Pythagoras by one version of the story perishing in the flames, and the members of the society were banished.

To sum up, the doctrine of Pythagoras may perhaps best be described as a great "impulse," which makes itself felt in succeeding generations. His teach-

ing, like that of all ancient philosophers, was not intended for "the many." To the few it was an inspiration. We recognise it in Socrates, who "followed the god" to the end, faithful to the life-mission which he believed had been imposed upon him by God Himself; in Plato, who delights in the thought of "likeness to God"; in the Stoics, who prided themselves upon it as their own distinguishing feature (*cf.* Schmidt, *Eth.*, i. 11).

(3) The Eleatic school takes its name from Elea or Velia in Southern Italy. Its founder, Xenophanes, who celebrated in a poem the founding also of the city of Elea, was a native of Colophon in Ionia; his period of activity may be placed in the latter half of the sixth century B.C.

The teaching of Xenophanes represents another and a most important "moment" in the efforts of the ancient Greek seekers after God. Now, for the first time on record, we meet with a mind which has the penetration to see that the popular conceptions of the Divine are radically wrong. Pythagoras had attacked the results of these conceptions, the false views held as to the CHARACTER of God; Xenophanes goes deeper still, and puts his finger on the root of the evil in the false views held as to the NATURE of God. Xenophanes, like Pythagoras, is indignant with Homer and Hesiod, because they had "attributed to the gods all that amongst men is disgraceful and culpable" (*Fr.*, 7; *cf.* Zeller, i. p. 561, note 1); but he goes beyond Pythagoras in two statements of vast importance:—

1. God is ONE: "One God there is, amongst gods and men the greatest."
2. God can in no way be compared to men: "Neither in form nor in mind is He like to mortals" (*Fr.*, 1; Zeller, i. p. 559, note 1).

The main polemic of Xenophanes is directed against the anthropomorphism of his day, and in this respect, by awakening thought on the matter, he did inestimable service. He traces its origin to man's unworthy conception of God, his representing the Divine Being as he himself with all his frailties and imperfections is. "If horses and oxen could paint," he says, "no doubt they would make gods like to horses and oxen" (*Fr.*, 1, 5 and 6; Zeller, i. p. 560, note 3).

But Xenophanes is supposed to have attacked also the polytheistic notions of his day. This from the fragment just quoted is not quite clear. In it God is "the greatest among gods and men"—a statement which applies equally to the Zeus of Homer, who is also "greatest among gods and men." And, later, the higher teaching of Xenophanes regarding the Supreme Being was adopted by those who adhered to polytheism. Nevertheless, Zeller is of opinion that Xenophanes himself was a pure monotheist (Zeller, i. p. 559, note 1, pp. 561–2; *Fr.*, 1 and 2). "God," says the philosopher in another striking fragment, "is all eye, all mind, all ear;" and again, in a third, "He through His intellect rules all things without exertion."

Another question of great interest is: Did Xenophanes identify God with the universe? Aristotle relates concerning him that "looking out upon the whole heavens, he said that the ONE Being was the Deity" (*Arist.*, *Met.*, i. 5). He is also represented as saying of himself, that wheresoever he turned his gaze, "all things resolved themselves into one and the same eternal, homogeneous essence" (*cf.* Zeller, p. 562). It is more than probable, therefore, that Xenophanes' conception of God was not theistic, but pan-theistic; that he thought of God as One Force which not only pervades all nature, but is inseparable from nature.

Great and epoch-making as was the teaching of Xenophanes, it certainly contained the elements out of which sprang the pantheistic doctrines of his successors, Parmenides and Zeno. His own sayings, however, are hardly



sufficient to enable us to come to any clear knowledge of his views, and it is better to leave the matter by saying, with Bishop Thirlwall: "As Thales saw gods in all things, so Xenophanes saw all things in God" (Thirlwall, *Hist.*, ii. 152).

To sum up: if the teaching of Pythagoras may be described as a great "impulse," that of Xenophanes may be defined as a great "challenge" thrown down amongst the thinkers of Greece—a challenge which henceforth no one could afford to disregard, and which may be enunciated thus:—

1. God is either like in form and mind to mortals, or He is not;
2. God is either chief among many gods, or He is the One Sole Divine Being;
3. God is either in essence One with, and inseparable from, the world, or He is a Person distinct from, and ruling over, the world.

These three grand issues were raised by the challenge thrown down by Xenophanes.

## § VII.—CLASSICAL PERIOD—PINDAR

### THE IDEA OF GOD

WHEN we turn to the conception of the Divine Being which meets us in Pindar, our first feeling is one of disappointment, for we find ourselves still in the old anthropomorphic trammels. Pindar has not thrown off, like Xenophanes, the notion of "human" gods. The reason of this, however, is not far to seek. Pindar is the most earnest of hero-worshippers,<sup>1</sup> and that which constitutes a "hero" in his eyes is affinity to the Divine. Pindar, in short, believes intensely in that doctrine of heredity which we have already examined (p. 314). His heroes are such by right of their descent from the gods; it is the grafting of the Divine upon the human stock, the infusion of Divine blood into human veins, which in his eyes makes a hero. This idea explains why Pindar, a Hellene of the Hellenes, with all his insight and his genius, could not abandon the old tradition. "Like sire, like son" is his doctrine. All that is noble and good in the heroes is due to their Divine parentage. Thus, concerning the mighty deeds of Achilles, he says: "Thenceforward a far-shining glory is joined to the house of Æacus, for thine, O Zeus, is their blood" (*Nem.*, iii. 64).<sup>2</sup> The prowess of a certain Rhodian family, reputed descendants of Heracles, is explained, again, by the reasoning: "For on the father's side they claim from Zeus" (*Ol.*, vii. 23). And Zeus himself is called upon to bless a victor belonging to this same family, whom the poet lauds as "having learned well the lessons given him by his true soul, which hath come to him from his noble ancestors" (*Ol.*, vii. 91).

This physical union with the Divine lies thus at the very basis of all the poet's ideas and arguments, and in its way it is a type and foreshadowing of that higher spiritual union which was one day to satisfy the yearnings of the human soul.

Behind the anthropomorphic and polytheistic foreground, however, there shines through clearly, in Pindar as in Homer, that strange monotheistic light, that belief which had its roots in the Heaven-Father of the old Aryan home. Three hundred years and more have brought no change in this. Zeus to Pindar also is the father (*Ol.*, i. 58), the most high (*Ol.*, iv. 1), the preserver that dwelleth above the clouds (*Ol.*, v. 17). "Most of all gods to be revered is Kronos' son, the deep-voiced lord of lightnings and of thunders" (*Pyth.*, vi. 23). Zeus himself is fate, allotting to each man his destiny (*Nem.*, iv. 61); he is the fulfiller, the accomplisher (*Ol.*, xiii. 115; *Pyth.*, i. 67); it is he who gives great valour (*aretē*) in answer to the reverent supplications of men (*Ol.*, viii. 8); his mighty mind directs<sup>3</sup> the fortunes of the men he loveth (*Pyth.*, v. 122). "From thee, O Zeus, come high excellences (*aretai*) to mortals" (*Isth.*, iii. 4). Concerning the great engagement at Salamis, that victory of victories, the poet says that he might indeed sing the praises of

<sup>1</sup> Be it noted, in the modern as well as in the ancient sense. For the latter, the cultus of the heroes as demi-gods, half-Divine men, see *ante*, p. 310.

<sup>2</sup> Peleus, the father of Achilles, was the son of Æacus, king of Ægina, a reputed son of Zeus.

<sup>3</sup> *Lit.*, steers.



those who fought there. "Yet," he adds, "let boasting be silenced.<sup>1</sup> Zeus apportioneth this or that—Zeus, lord of all" (*Isth.*, iv. 51).

It is by the help of Zeus, again, that a man who is chief, and who (like Abraham) commands his son after him, giveth due honour to the people, and so turneth them with one voice to peace (*Pyth.*, i. 69). Zeus is still the witness of the oath (*Pyth.*, iv. 166); still the father of host and guest whose anger is to be feared in any violation of the sacred guest-right (*Nem.*, v. 33; xi. 8).

In Pindar, moreover, as in Homer (p. 225), we note that significant omission of the name "Zeus," and the substitution for it of the simple *Theos*, God. This occurs in some of the most striking passages—e.g. "Only by the help of God (*ek Theou*) is wisdom<sup>2</sup> kept ever blooming in the soul" (*Ol.*, x. (xi.) 10); "God (*Theos*) accomplisheth all ends according to His wish—God (*Theos*), who overtaketh even the winged eagle, and outstrippeth the dolphin of the sea, who layeth low many a mortal in his haughtiness, while to others He giveth glory imperishable" (*Pyth.*, ii. 49); "If any man expect that in doing aught he shall be unseen of God (*Theos*) he erreth" (*Ol.*, i. 66).<sup>3</sup>

With Pindar, therefore, as with Homer, the Invisible Justice, as God, centres in the father, to whom "reverence is most of all" to be paid; but Pindar, as we know, is a son of the new era as well as of the old, and he turns with joy and enthusiasm to the new hope which Delphi and Pythagoras hold out—the hope of personal communion with this father through the medium of his son Apollo, the revealer of his will.

No one who studies Pindar's allusions to Apollo, the evident delight with which he dwells on the golden-haired god and his "sweet-incensed shrine," "earth's centre-stone," in the glen of Parnassus, can doubt that the poet speaks from his heart, that he really clings with rapture to the thought of a glorious being who "imparteth unto men and women remedies for sore maladies and hath bestowed on them the lute,<sup>4</sup> and giveth the muse unto whomsoever he will, bringing into their hearts sweet order<sup>5</sup> of peace" (*Pyth.*, v. 63).

"My king!" he says again, "with willing heart I avow that through thee I see harmony in all that I sing of every victor" (*Pyth.*, viii. 67).

How, then, are we to regard these declarations of a deep personal belief? As mere poetic outbursts? Nay, rather, in the mouth of a lover of truth like Pindar, do they strike us as a deep presentiment of the truth, another instance of the "touch" which has felt after and just discerned something of the nature of God. Pindar's Apollo, the giver of harmony, is a foreshadowing of the great reality—a type, and a beautiful type, of the Giver of peace. Surely only by seeing and rejoicing in this can we do justice to the highest aspirations of antiquity. These, so far as communion with God and the attaining to the knowledge of His will are concerned, centre in Apollo-Phæbus, god of light. To him, as the revealer of the desires of the Invisible Justice, not only Pindar, one of the noblest, but Socrates, one of the wisest of these ancient seekers, looked. To Pindar Apollo reveals God because the father is "his most righteous<sup>6</sup> partner; because Apollo is himself true, with lies he hath naught to do

<sup>1</sup> Lit., steep boasting in silence; drown, put out the unholy flame of self-exaltation, lest it draw down upon us the nemesis of him who "apportioneth" (*nem-ei*) the fortunes of men (see *ante*, p. 94).

<sup>2</sup> Or poetic genius.

<sup>3</sup> *Hamartanei*, misseth the mark, sinneth.

<sup>4</sup> Apollo is the patron both of medicine and of music, two arts held in antiquity to be closely allied.

<sup>5</sup> Lit., *eunomia*, fair order. It was thought to be the office of music to soothe and bring health to the soul at war with itself and the world.

<sup>6</sup> Lit., most straightforward.

[light can have no fellowship with darkness], neither in deed or device may god or man deceive him" (*Pyth.*, iii. 28, 29).

And yet, while we seek to do full justice to all high thoughts of antiquity, we have only to turn to certain other representations of the gods by this same sweet and noble singer in order to become at once aware that a great and impassable gulf separates his conception of the Divine from ours, for the gods of Pindar are subject to like passions with men. This, of course, springs from the anthropomorphic standpoint of the poet, a standpoint which seemed to him all-essential. To have swept away the old myths concerning the Divine descent, say, of the *Æacidae*, of the just king *Æacus* and his descendants, *Peleus* and *Telamon*, *Achilles* and *Ajax*, or of the *Dioscouri*, the noble pair of Spartan brothers, would have been simply to cut the ground from beneath the entire Pindaric method of working. For it is by the example of the heroes of the olden time, heroes of Divine lineage, that the poet would spur on the heroes of his own time, those who hardened their bodies and steeled their nerves in the gymnasia and the voluntary contests of the great games for the overwhelming and involuntary contests of *Thermopylæ* and *Salamis* and *Himera*, and what struggles soever might yet remain to be undertaken in the future.

Yet here again let us do justice to Pindar—his gods are not subject to all the passions that disfigure humanity. Pindar in this also is the child of the new time as well as of the old, and although he retains what he believes in, the Divine lineage of "Divine" men, yet in no way will he allow that the gods can err or do wrong. He will not repeat or endorse, if he can help it, any unworthy tale concerning them. The gods, he says, must be spoken of honourably, and proceeds to add, as a comment on the horrible legend of *Tantalus* and *Pelops*, that he himself "will speak contrariwise" to the former narrators of the story. He simply does not believe it, but regards it as a slander invented by the malicious neighbours of *Tantalus* (*Ol.*, i. 35 *et seq.*).

Again, in regard to strife amongst the gods, he says: "Fling this tale from thee, O my mouth, for to speak ill of gods is a hateful wisdom, and words loud and without measure sound a note that is in unison with madness. Of such things talk thou not" (*Ol.*, ix. 35).

Pindar, then, while holding fast to the old polytheistic and anthropomorphic religion, is no less zealous than *Xenophanes* in his efforts to purify it, and to cast out from the popular notions all that in his opinion is unworthy of the gods. From one and all of the old myths he contrives to draw a moral lesson. In his hands the story of *Tantalus* becomes a warning against *hybris*, that sin of sins, presumption showing itself boldly in all its arrogance in broad daylight; that of *Ixion* a warning against the double sin of *hybris* and ingratitude; that of *Bellerophon* against the *hybris* of overweening contention. The story of *Jason* and his comrades and that of *Pelops* inspire to energy and action; whilst the tale of the sufferings of *Ino* and *Semele*, the daughters of *Cadmus*, teaches resignation—sore grief must needs come before joy. And so on. No myth passes through Pindar's hands without yielding any sweetness which it has to impart.

Perhaps the most beautiful instance of this is the story of the *Dioscouri*, *Helen's* twin brothers—one of whom, *Polydeukes*, is the son of *Zeus*; the other, *Kastor*, of a mortal father. When *Kastor* falls, slain by a revengeful foe, *Polydeukes* is inconsolable. With hot tears he cries to *Zeus*:—

"Father *Kronion*, what end shall there be to my sorrows? Give me, even me, O Lord, to die with him. The glory is departed from a man that is bereft of his friends. Few among mortals are they that be faithful in trouble, sharers of toil."



Thus Polydeukes cries, and Zeus himself comes and stands before him, and tells him of his own Divine birth and the mortal nature of the dying Kastor. He then gives the hero choice of two fates; he may, if he will, escape death and hateful old age, and dwell for ever in Olympus. "This lot is thine (by right of inheritance). But if in thy brother's cause thou wilt contend, and art minded in all to share equally with him, then half thy time thou shalt live in the world beneath (the house of Hades) and half within the golden house of heaven."

When he had thus spoken, of no double mind was Polydeukes. So Zeus forthwith gave back sighs, and presently voice, to Kastor of the brazen mail, because of the tender pity of his son. Thenceforward Polydeukes, the immortal, divested himself of his immortality that he might share it with his mortal brother.

And so, in the hands of Pindar, the beautiful old Aryan nature-parable of the twilight-day fading into darkness, darkness brightening into day, becomes the most touching of symbols, and Polydeukes, in his generous self-effacement, the type of a yet deeper and Divine love.

There is no gainsaying the fact that Pindar's ideals, both of the Divine and the Divine in man, prepared the ancient Greek world to understand and accept the reality when it was presented to them—better, in one sense, than did their Hebrew brethren.

The Incarnation did not take the Greeks by surprise—how could it? They had their own idea of what to look for in a Divine Being who would come to them "in the likeness of a man." "Then came to us," so runs the story, "the lonely god, having put on the glorious presence of a noble man, worthy to be revered, and began friendly speech, such as the beneficent use in bidding approaching strangers welcome to the feast."

The foregoing forms part of Pindar's version of the old myth of the Argonauts, as told in the fourth Pythian ode (28 *et seq.*). The incident occurs whilst the voyagers are on the Libyan sea-shore, after long wandering through the desert. But do not the words strike us with a strangely familiar sound? Do they not remind us of One who was "lonely" in the midst of the ninety-and-nine elements of Divine bliss in heaven, and descended to earth to seek His lost sheep after their wanderings in the desert,<sup>1</sup> and put on the glorious presence of a man worthy to be revered (*aidoion*), and stood upon the sea-shore, and began friendly words<sup>2</sup> such as the beneficent<sup>3</sup> use in bidding strangers welcome to the feast? "Children, have ye any meat?" "Eat, O friends; drink, yea drink abundantly, O beloved!"<sup>4</sup>

## THE IDEALS

If in Hesiod we felt that we had come to the end of a period—that the tide had receded and left behind only a flat, monotonous, far-reaching strand of life—in Pindar we are carried again on the very top of the wave, we share in its glorious inrush. In every line of the poet there breathes the spirit of expectancy—expectancy chastened indeed, the expectation of one who has thought much on life and its problems, nevertheless the expectancy of one who has faith in his age and his country.

<sup>1</sup> *Oiopolos*, here rendered "lonely," means literally tending sheep—hence, lonely, solitary, as indicative of the life of the shepherd. Both meanings are given in Schol. Ver. in *Iliad*, xiii. 473 (Liddell and Scott).

<sup>2</sup> *Archeto philōn d'epēōn*, words of love.

<sup>3</sup> The *eu-ergetai*, the doers of good.

<sup>4</sup> St. John xxi. 5; Cant. v. 1.

The "Tantalus-stone" that hung over Hellas, the "intolerable suffering" of the Persian invasion, was rolled back (*Isth.*, vii. 9), and the "God-built freedom" of Hellas secured in his time. It is in Pindar more than in any other writer that we see and feel the reflex action of that age of intense strain, of intense joy also, and a patriotism that has never been surpassed.<sup>1</sup> True, the glory of the issue must have been robbed of more than half its lustre and of all its sweetness to the poet from the despicable part played in the great struggle by his own mother-city, Thebes. For not only did she throw open her gates to the invader, and entered into cowardly alliance with him, but she fought on his side against those of her brethren who had staked their all on the defence of Hellas. Bitter as this fact must have been to Pindar—"sore of heart though I be," he says of himself (*Isth.*, vii. 5)—he is too true a Hellene, too large-minded, not to glory in the triumph of united Hellas. He is not to be tied by the policy of his native town. He is a Theban—true, but a Hellene first. His whole soul is in sympathy with the attitude taken by Athens—"bright and famous Athens," the "bulwark of Hellas"—towards the common foe.<sup>2</sup>

Naturally, therefore, the ideals of Pindar take shape from the age—an age, like the Homeric, of generous impulses and heroic deeds. Some three or four of the forty-five extant odes are supposed to have been written before the battle of Marathon (490 B.C.); a few more between Marathon and Plataea (479 B.C.); but by far the greater number must in all probability be placed after "the fierce snowstorm of war" which had desolated so many happy hearths had passed, and Hellas had entered on a new era. The wintry darkness is over, and once again she bloometh "as in the flowery months earth bloometh with red roses by the counsels of gods" (*Isth.*, iii. 35 *et seq.*).<sup>3</sup>

In the sunshine of these new hopes, everything that is bright and glorious and true-hearted in the Hellenic nature blossoms forth too, and in walking in the garden of Pindar's "red roses" the difficulty of selection presses keenly. To his ideals, however, a very beautiful simile gives us a safe clue. Says the poet:—

"The wearing of wreaths is an easy thing. Wait a while! the Muse verily joineth together gold and white ivory, yea, and a lily-flower which she hath plucked from beneath the deep sea's dew" (*Nem.*, vii. 77).

These precious exponents of the Divine crown, more precious than the "red roses," the beauties of expression which bloom on the surface of the odes, we may take to be the poet's high ideals of life, the fine gold of proved worth, the white ivory of truth, the lily-flower of peace, plucked from beneath the high waves of an age of extraordinary advances and extraordinary dangers. Proved worth, truth, peace! those are the ideals of Pindar, ideals for all time.

(1) **Proved Worth.**—Worth, with Pindar, as with Homer and Hesiod, is the *aretē*, that essential manliness which, beginning with valour, ends in virtue, the working out of all noble deeds. With Pindar, however, the *aretē*, as is natural in one whose aim is to sing of the heroes of old, and thus to inspire the heroes of to-day, takes more particularly the form of readiness to face danger and make ventures, or literally experiments.

<sup>1</sup> The strain and the "patriotism" are no less marked in Æschylus, but we miss in him, for reasons which will become clear, the joyous ring of Pindar.

<sup>2</sup> So generously indeed did he sing the praises of Athens that the jealousy of Thebes was aroused, and the poet condemned by his fellow-citizens in a heavy fine. This the noble Athenians promptly paid, and showed their appreciation of the poet's eulogium by placing his statue among those of their own gods and heroes in their agora.

<sup>3</sup> The reference to the "snowstorm of war" and the subsequent "blossoming of peace" occurs in the third Isthmian ode, which is placed about 478 or a little later, after the final defeat of the Persians under Mardonius at Plataea.



If the work of experimenting was, as we hold it to have been, the grand mission of the Hellenes, then is Pindar in truth a Hellene of the Hellenes, the very representative of the race. What cares he for manliness or talent or *aretē* of any sort, so long as it remains hidden "in a corner," and has not been brought to the touch-stone of trial? Only by the results of the testing is true gold distinguishable from false. "Trial is the test<sup>1</sup> of mortals" (*Ol.*, iv. 17); and again, "By trial (experiment) is the issue manifest" (*Nem.*, iii. 70).

Nor is the trial, to Pindar's mind, an easy one, a mere walk over the course. Not in such wise was the struggle at Olympia and elsewhere fought out—the *agōn* which has left its mark in our own "agony." Toil, pain, danger had to be faced. And if this held good in the voluntary contests of the great games, how much more in the greater contests for which the poet sought to nerve his fellows!

Danger and glory! These are synonymous terms to Pindar. "Deeds done without risk," he says, "are unhonoured either among men or among the hollow ships; but many make mention of a noble deed if it be wrought out with toil" (*Ol.*, vi. 9). And of a hero it is said: "In no hidden corner quenched he his youth, in noble deeds unproven (*apeiron*)" (*Isth.*, vii. 70). The highest prize of all is only to be won by him who expends toil and suffering (*ponos*) with joy in the attainment of god-built excellence" (*Isth.*, v. 10).

Such is Pindar's idea of proved worth—tested worth—and in this, as in much else, he is but the mouthpiece of his countrymen.

(2) **Truth.**—Closely connected with Pindar's ideal of real worth is his love of truth. Among these old seekers after righteousness, Pindar is pre-eminently the apostle of truth. What "justice" is to Hesiod, that "truth" is to Pindar, the very daughter of God (*Ol.*, x. (xi.) 4). In the opening of a poem now lost (*Fr.*, 221), he apostrophises truth as queen, the beginning of great virtue, and prays her not to let his work stumble upon a lie. The character, again, of Apollo, god of light, his "king" as the poet calls him, is truth, as we have seen, and for himself Pindar declares that with "no lie" will he stain his tale (*Ol.*, iv. 15).

And what he finds in God, and strives after for himself, he demands in every relation of life—in his heroes and in his statesmen. The very mark of a youthful hero—of his hero of heroes, Jason—is, when he first appears upon the scene, that he has fulfilled his twenty years of life without deceitful word or deed (*Pyth.*, iv. 104). From Pindar's own innate abhorrence of double-dealing, again, the character of one of the most popular of the old heroes, Odysseus, the "man of many devices," as set forth in the later legends<sup>2</sup>—the type for excellence of the wily Greek—is as hateful to the poet as to ourselves. "Through shiftily lying," he says, "it was that Odysseus obtained the great prize of the armour of Achilles over Ajax, the man stout of heart, but lacking the gift of speech" (*Nem.*, viii. 25).<sup>3</sup>

And as for the State, never will Pindar admit that falsehood or deception can be serviceable to it. Whatever be the form of government, he says—whether tyrant, or turbulent mob, or the wise be in power—"the man of direct speech is best" (*Pyth.*, iii. 86); a sentiment with which his noble counsel to Hieron, the ruler of Syracuse, is strictly in keeping: "Guide with just helm thy people," he says, "and forge thy speech on no false anvil!" (*Pyth.*, i. 86). Justice and truth are to be the guardians of the State.

<sup>1</sup> Lit., experiment-carried-through (*diapēira*) is the proof of the cross-examination (as it were) (*elenchos*) of mortals.

<sup>2</sup> Not in Homer; see *ante*. There Odysseus is a truly noble type.

<sup>3</sup> *Aglosson*—lit., without tongue, to set forth his own merits.

(3) **Peace.**—The lily-flower plucked with difficulty from beneath the deep sea's dew may be taken as emblematic of that state or condition which is only attained, either by the State or by the individual, after hard struggle and conflict. Pindar has three beautiful names for his lily—*Eirēnē*, *Hēsychia*, *Eunomia*—and they may be regarded as three successive stages or degrees of the same quality:—

*Eirēnē*, as the foundation, the means whereby peace is ensured—unity and gentle words;

*Hēsychia*, the quietness, stillness, restfulness that follows;<sup>1</sup>

*Eunomia*, the means whereby peace is maintained—fair order of law.

From what we already know of Pindar, we surmise at once that his ideal is by no means "peace at any price." How could this possibly be? Peace, he says, is the daughter of Justice, and she must avenge her mother's cause.

"O kindly Peace!" he exclaims, "thou daughter of *Dikē*, thou makest cities great, thou that hast the supreme keys of counsels and—of wars!"

Peace here is *Hēsychia*, rest; but *Hēsychia* will, nay must, rouse herself from her quiet mood when necessity calls.

"Thou knowest," he continues, "alike to give and to take gentleness; but whensoever any one harbours relentless ill-will in his heart, then thou" (even thou, sweet Peace) "with stern mind steppest forth to confront his might and sinkest presumption (*hybris*) in the depths of the sea."

Naturally Pindar has here in immediate view the crowning defeat of the Persian in the great sea fight at Salamis,<sup>2</sup> but everywhere the man of truth preaches the most true doctrine that conflict is the price of peace—there is no true and honourable peace without it. Opposing forces, the forces of disorder, have to be subdued before the natural powers—whether in the *makrokosmos* of the universe or the *mikrokosmos* of man—are brought under the spiritual dominion of order and peace: a lesson typified in (and made familiar to all Hellenes by) the ancient myths of the war between the giants and their ally the monster Typhon on the one side, and the might of Olympus on the other—myths which, as usual, Pindar here presses into service.

But *Eirēnē*, peace, and *Hēsychia*, rest, even when won, can only be maintained by *Eunomia*, fair order, the glorious preserver, as Pindar elsewhere calls her. How is a State or an individual to attain to this? Only by obedience to good laws, as the word *eu-nomia* (*nomos* = law) itself implies, thereby betokening a state the very reverse of that known as *a-nomia* = lawlessness, a term used in the Septuagint and, following this, by the New Testament writers to designate "sin."<sup>3</sup> *Eu-nomia*, fair order of law, is utterly opposed to *a-nomia*, lawlessness.

But how is a man to keep himself under law? The law of the State is there and must be obeyed—but to govern the self is a harder task. How is it to be done? Pindar's reply is essentially and peculiarly Hellenic: By always aiming at the mean, the happy path of moderation in desire, in ambition, in the conduct of life.

The doctrine of the mean is not confined to Pindar. We remember the "nothing too much" of the wise man. We have seen the mean in Hesiod,<sup>4</sup> and will find it set forth by every master of Hellas until we arrive at Aristotle, in whom, as a counsel of perfection, it culminates.

<sup>1</sup> Used in this sense in *Dem.*, lxiii. 10.

<sup>2</sup> The eighth Pythian ode is supposed by some to have been written shortly after this event.

<sup>3</sup> The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews says of the Divine Son (i. 9, quoting from Psalm xlv. 7): "Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity (*anomia*), wherefore God, even Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows."

<sup>4</sup> See p. 319 n.



The mean, indeed, may itself be likened to the lily-flower plucked from beneath the sea. Just as the precious coral may not be reached, on the one side, by the swish of a high wave carrying the diver beyond the right spot; and, on the other, by the suction of a receding wave dragging him backwards with it—so the mean, the *juste milieu*, the wisely modest middle course, can only be held fast by the avoidance of extremes—excess, the too-much, is to it as fatal as is deficiency, the too-little.<sup>1</sup> Due measure (*metron*) is therefore to be observed in all things. "Meet is it to pursue advantage moderately. Fiercest is the madness of unappeasable desires" (*Nem.*, xi. 47).<sup>2</sup> And if for the individual, so also in the State. "God grant me," says the poet, "to love things noble, earnestly seeking things possible (*dunata*) in my life's prime. For in things of the State I find the middle course (*ta mesa*) flourishing longest in happiness, and therefore the tyrant's lot I condemn, and I strive after common virtues" (*Pyth.*, xi. 51)—that is, I strive after virtues which all good citizens should possess in common, and not after power or peace or the too-much in everything.

Yet note that the Greek Pindar does not pray in the letter the prayer of the Hebrew wise man:<sup>3</sup> "Give me neither poverty nor riches," inasmuch as he believes the possession of riches when rightly used to be a great power for good. "Wide-spreading is the might of wealth" (*Pyth.*, v. 1), he says, "when mortal man hath received it, with pure virtue mingled, from the hand of destiny." Nevertheless, he does pray in the spirit the prayer of Agur: "Remove far from me vanity and lies." He warns all, as we shall presently see, to flee from the arrogance and insolence that too often accompany the possession or desire of wealth. "The *aidos*, spirit of reverence, that bringeth glory," he says, "is stolen secretly by love of gain" (*Nem.*, ix. 43).

How closely Pindar's ideals—proved worth, truth, the mean—are associated in his mind is clearly seen in the warm encomium which he passes upon Lampôn, a certain citizen of Ægina, whose merit consists in this (*Isth.*, v. 66): not only that he bestows great pains upon all that he does and thereby brings fame to his city—not only that he is loved for his kindness to strangers—but that he "strives after the just mean (*metra*) in his mind, that he holds fast the just mean, and that his tongue departeth not from his thoughts"—literally, is not outside of his thoughts, *i.e.* mind and tongue are one, single and not double.

And now let us look at another characteristically Hellenic way of preserving peace. Supposing that we have won our lily-flower, our precious coral, Eunomia, by strenuous effort, we must shape and fashion it. Strange to say, this second mode, like the first, is also contained in the word itself. By one of those beautiful developments which must be traced back to the coining of the Greek language in the earliest times out of the primitive root-nuggets, *eu-nomia* is not only fair law but fair melody. *Nomos*, as we have already seen,<sup>4</sup> signifies both a law, or something established by custom, and a musical strain; for music, as the Greeks early perceived, is an orderly progression of sounds ordered by law and number. The *nomos* was more especially a religious "tone" or strain, handed down from ancient times and chanted by the priest during the sacrifices. There can be little doubt that Pindar uses the word in its double sense when he says that Apollo gives remedies to men and women

<sup>1</sup> "Amongst mortals one is thrown down from weal by empty boasts, while another by too much mistrusting of his strength is pushed aside from honours due, for that the spirit of little daring draggeth him backwards by the hand" (*Nem.*, xi. 29 et seq.).

<sup>2</sup> The metaphor is taken from the chase: "Meet is it to hunt after gain or profit with moderation (*metron*). Fiercest is the madness of desires not to be reached"—ever eluding the hunter's grasp.

<sup>3</sup> Prov. xxx. 8.

<sup>4</sup> See the section on Language, p. 95.

for sore diseases, and hath bestowed on them the lyre and giveth the muse unto whomsoever he will, bringing into their hearts *eu-nomia*—both fair melody and fair law, combining to give fair harmony of soul, sweet order of peace.

Possibly we must not here exclude the wider meaning of "music," as understood among the Greeks, viz. literature, poetry, everything that tends to refinement and cultivation; but as to the peculiar power of the "tone-art" to bring healing and "tone" into a mind at war with itself and so restore peace, all antiquity is at one.

For evidence as to Pindar's belief in the soothing effects of music (in our sense) we have only to turn to the magnificent address to his "golden lyre," which opens the first Pythian ode. The "sworded lightning of immortal fire" is quenched; the swift eagle of Zeus, the violence of Ares, hot-headed war, alike are held spell-bound by its mysterious influence.

To sum up: Peace, the lily-flower, is plucked from the depths by Eirēnē, unity and gentle words; is developed by Hēsychia, restful calm, wherein leisure is gained for all noble and refining pursuits. Finally, it is upheld jointly by guardians both gentle and stern—Eunomia, fair harmony; Eunomia, fair order of law, repression of immoderate desire, the mean.

We shall see presently how far Pindar's ideals were attained by the "age-fellows" and others to whom he held them forth. Meanwhile let us note (as he would have us note) that, after all said and done, like the gold of proved worth, the lily-flower of soul harmony is the gift of God.

The gentle moderation of our poet is, perhaps, nowhere better expressed than in a beautiful prayer for himself which occurs in the eighth Nemean ode. After deprecating the hate and deception which existed even in ancient days, accompanying with wily tales, cunning devices, and evil-working slander that doeth violence to that thing that shineth and lifteth up the rotten fame of obscure men, he proceeds (*Nem.*, viii. 32 *et seq.*):—

"Never in me be this mind,<sup>1</sup> O Father Zeus! but to the paths of simplicity<sup>2</sup> may I cleave throughout my life, that dying I may lay upon my children no ill-repute.

"Some pray for gold and some for boundless land—but I, amid the town-folk's love, would shroud my limbs in earth, still honouring where honour is due, and sowing rebuke on evil-doers.

"Thus virtue groweth, uplifted by wise men and just, as when a tree fed by fresh dew shooteth upwards to the moist æther."

Pindar had his wish. The spot where his limbs lay "enshrined in earth" was always held sacred in Hellas and beyond Hellas—in the sack of Thebes, Alexander of Macedon bade spare the poet's dwelling; and the "townsfolk," in whose memory the love of him still lives, embrace within their ranks all those in the great world-state who can understand and reverence a noble spirit.

Nevertheless, we have somewhat against our bard. Soft as is his thought, sweet as is his "honey," it cannot be denied that both were reserved for the victors, the fortunate, those on whom success had smiled. For the losers, the unfortunate, Pindar has no word, no message of consolation. If he thinks at all of those who have been defeated in the great games, it is simply that he

<sup>1</sup> Lit., this habit (*ethos*), this tendency to exalt oneself by depreciating others. The passage follows the contrast drawn between the wily Odysseus and the simple-minded Ajax (see ante, p. 345).

<sup>2</sup> Lit., in single paths—*haploos*, one-fold, single-minded, as opposed to *diploos*, two-fold, double-minded, treacherous.



may present them as a foil to the victor. Thus in the eighth Olympian ode (68) he says of the winner in the wrestling match (of boys) that he has put off from himself the disgrace of defeat to the bodies of the four youths with whom he had contended. And in the eighth Pythian (81) he repeats the same congratulation, picturing with even more vividness the sorry plight of those who had failed—how for them there was no glad return from the Pythian feast, for them no sweet welcome of a mother's kiss of joy—nay! but by secret paths they slink to their homes, shrinking from their enemies, heart-pierced by the disaster which has befallen them.

And yet the losers in these and the other contests of the great games may have deserved praise no less than the victors. They had voluntarily undergone the same training, submitted to the same discipline; they had perchance nerved themselves for the contest before assembled Hellas by some inspiring word of the very poet who now scouts them. To fail in the games must have been to the Greek of Pindar's age, thirsting for renown and fair fame, the keenest of disappointments. Surely a word of approval of the effort made, of the venturing up to the "touchstone" from their "unproven" security, would have come with exquisite grace from the great singer? We look in vain for it; Pindar simply turns his back upon the defeated.

Let us not judge him too harshly for this. In his eyes victory in the games, like the other prizes of life, is a gift from the gods—why should he feel compassion for those whom they have passed over? This seems to be the reasoning. It savours to us of a certain hardness, but this same harshness meets us everywhere in antiquity; a kindly sympathy for "failures" was first breathed into human society by One whose whole life, judged by society's standards, was a failure.

## SIN

It is not precisely to odes in celebration of the most joyous and exultant of occasions that one would naturally turn for utterances on the deeper and more serious aspects of human life, and yet, as we have seen, these aspects are never far from Pindar's thoughts. Hence we may ask concerning him a question which, in reference to almost any other writer of festal songs, would be strangely out of place: Did our poet know anything of that which Homer, as well as ourselves, knew to be "sin"; or, in the centuries of "development" from Homer onwards, have men arrived at the comfortable conclusion that they are without fault?

Pindar has a very decided answer to give. "Round the minds of men," he says (*Ol.*, vii. 24-26, 30, 31), "there hang errors (*amplakia*) innumerable . . . this is the impossible thing to find out—what shall be best for a man *both now and at the last* . . . for tumults of the mind lead even the wise men astray." And again in the same ode (the seventh Olympian) we read that "reverence, that proceedeth from forethought, putteth excellence (*aretē* = virtue) and joy (the joy of attaining it) into the hearts of men, but unawares there cometh upon them a cloud of forgetfulness and draweth the straight path of action far from the mind" (*Ol.*, vii. 43-47).

We must not let the fact that these thoughts occur in connection with Pindar's version of one of the old myths—that of the "history" of Rhodes—blind us to another fact, viz. that the poet is an exceedingly earnest moral teacher. If he says that Tlepolemus was "led astray by the tumults of his soul," he means to imply that the wisest of his own day may be no wiser. If he says that men may have the "joy of excellence," and yet be drawn "from

straight paths by a cloud of forgetfulness," he is simply bidding his countrymen, who were rejoicing in their own *aretē*, Beware! In an age like that of the Persian wars, when a more than human success seemed to attend Hellenic effort, there was imminent danger that the boundary line would be overstepped, and human pride exalt itself beyond measure, and Pindar would not have been the great teacher that he is had he not foreseen and put his age-fellows on guard against this perilous rock ahead.

We remember that in Homer the names for "sin" were for the most part such as denoted less a wilful than a blind perversion of the moral sense, leading men to stray from the right path. This view is not wanting in Pindar, as we have already seen; but the term which he almost invariably applies to sin is one used less frequently than the others in Homer (although there, too, it frequently appears), viz. *hybris*, a word best rendered by our "presumption." This expression we shall meet with again and again in all the great writers of the age, and it behoves us to examine it carefully.

Some scholars (including Gesenius) have ascribed to it, as we have seen,<sup>1</sup> a Semitic origin; but at the present day this opinion has been combated. In the first place *hybris* cannot be traced satisfactorily to any Semitic root; and in the second, as Aug. Müller has shown, the Greeks never borrowed an abstract term. G. Curtius connects it with *hyper*, over-and-above, and although, as he himself points out, there are difficulties in this etymology, yet it may certainly be taken as expressing the opinion of the Greeks concerning the meaning of the word. Pindar would seem to point to this when, in his allegory, he calls the child of *hybris* *koros*, for *koros* is that species of insolence which proceeds from the over-and-above, surfeit, fulness-too-great of bread, or strength, or riches.

*Hybris* may be regarded then as fulness of sin—sin committed, not out of mortal weakness through missing the mark (*hamartanein*), but from pride of heart and overweening self-conceit. *Hybris* would seem to have three distinct stages in its inception and development:—

(a) In the first degree it disposes a man to ascribe all his success in life to himself—to say in the depth of his heart, "My own right hand and my own strong arm, they have gotten me the victory"—and so to set an undue value upon himself and his achievements.

(b) In the second degree it makes a man in his undue self-esteem arrogant and regardless of the feelings and rights of others, as shown in the conduct of Agamemnon to Achilles—fitly designated by the poet as *hybris*.

(c) In the third and culminating degree it leads a man to defy the great unseen Power, and to say, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice?"

*Hybris*, it will thus be seen, is simply the exaggerated development of the *ego*, and from its intimate connection with a man's self, the tendency to it is constantly present, ready to spring up at any moment. Pindar recognises this when he calls the offspring of *hybris* *aiānēs koros*, everlasting never-ceasing insolence, the besetting sin that only with difficulty can be put down. Amongst a people like the Hellenes, in whom the *ego*, the individuality, was, as we have seen, so intense and marked, that natural and noble self-reliance which is inseparably united to intellectual strength was but too apt to degenerate into its bastard brother, self-exaltation. Hence the poet's most earnest warnings are directed against this fatal over-and-above.

He combats *hybris* in the first degree by pointing out that all power, all fame, all successes are the gift of God. "They are given in answer to the reverent

<sup>1</sup> Vide p. 287.



prayers of men." How often "by the help of God," "by the favour of God" (*Ol.*, viii. 8),<sup>1</sup> is brought into connection with success any one can estimate for himself by simply looking through a translation of the odes.

Pindar's thoughts on this matter are all summed up in his gentle counsel to Arkesilas, king of Cyrene. This ruler, in whose honour two of the most beautiful songs in the whole collection—the fourth and fifth Pythian—were written, seems to have been not only an accomplished man—he had "wings to soar with the Muses as his mother before him"—but upright he walked in justice. He was, moreover, wealthy and powerful—king over great cities, and honoured by all. Add to this that he had just received the crowning joy of being proclaimed victor in the great chariot-race at Delphi—and it is plain that we have in Arkesilas the very type and emblem of success and glory, as it was understood among the Hellenes. Yet it is to such an one that Pindar addresses the warning (*Pyth.*, v. 12, 23 *et seq.*): "The wise bear better the power that is given of God. . . . Forget not, when thy praise is sung at Cyrene, to set God above all as the cause thereof."

This for the individual; and for the nation there is the no less significant warning concerning the great victory at Salamis. Herodotus tells us (viii. 93) that that victory was due mainly to the impetuous bravery of the Æginetans, and in an ode written for a hero of Ægina (the fourth Isthmian) the poet might have been excused for descanting on this theme. He alludes to it indeed, and says that his ready tongue has arrows in store wherewith to celebrate the valour of Ægina's seamen, the valour that delivered Salamis on that dread day when "death fell thick as hail on the unnumbered hosts in the destroying tempest of Zeus, but," he suddenly stops, and, instead of the arrows of praise, comes the warning (*Isth.*, iv. 46 *et seq.*), "Nevertheless, let no boast be heard. Zeus orders this and that—Zeus, lord of all." Pindar, at least, would have understood the great argument of St. Paul: "Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay, but by the law of faith, for *what hast thou that thou didst not receive?*"

*Hybris* in the second degree, advancing from the inward to the outward stage, and showing itself openly in insolent disregard of others, Pindar holds in extreme detestation. His remedy for it is the mean, for the striving after the just mean necessitates self-knowledge, and in the effort a man will learn his true place among his fellows, and keep it. At the same time "the abhorring of presumption" Pindar, the aristocrat, would seem to associate with his doctrine of heredity and the spirit of *noblesse oblige* (*Ol.*, vii. 87). "Father Zeus," he prays concerning one of his victors, "give this man honour both from citizens and from strangers; for he walketh in the straight path that abhorreth presumption (*hybris*), having learnt well the lessons taught him by his true soul, which hath come to him from noble sires." *Hybris* in this particular form, showing itself in insolence, would seem to be, then, the vice of the *parvenu*; courtesy and consideration for others a feature in the *kalos kagathos*, part of the legacy handed down as the result of the striving of generations after the noble and the good.<sup>2</sup> However this may be, no one in his eyes is entitled to honour who gives way to presumption. "If any among men," he says (*Isth.*, iii. 1), "dwelling in good fortune, and having won renown in the games, or by the power of wealth, restraineth in his heart besetting

<sup>1</sup> When Pindar ascribes a gift to the Muses or the Graces, we must bear in mind that this also comes in his eyes through them as channels from Zeus; all the other divinities are merely to Pindar, as to Homer, messengers or delegates of Zeus.

<sup>2</sup> Pindar, however, does not use the compound *kalos kagathos*, although he, like Homer, knows and employs *kalon*, beautiful, to denote "the noble."

insolence (the everlasting *koros*), *that* man is worthy to share in the praises of the citizens."

But again follows the warning, "From thee, O Zeus, alone cometh high excellence to mortals, and longer liveth the bliss of him who standeth in awe of thee;<sup>1</sup> but with men of perverse mind<sup>2</sup> it companieth not, flourishing throughout all time."

Finally, the third and most fatal development of the *hybris* is that which brings men into antagonism with the controlling power of the universe, the tendency which leads a man, either through perversion of the intellect, through failure to recognise his own limitations, or through rebellion of the will, to throw the unwritten laws from his heart and ask concerning the Invisible Justice, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice?"

That men in general, Gentiles no less than Jews, clearly knew these unwritten laws, and recognised in their own hearts the working of the Invisible Justice, there is not a shadow of doubt. Nevertheless, the myths, together with any fragments of truth contained in them, had left behind a terrible legacy; and the more honest and upright a man was in his own walk in life, the greater were the difficulties which they raised. The teachings of Pythagoras and Xenophanes had reached the European as well as the Asiatic Hellenes, and the secret whisper in many a heart must have been, "If God, if the gods, are as the poets describe, how are they better than myself?"

Pindar, as we have seen, boldly grapples with the difficulty. "Throw away this tale, O my mouth," he says of one of the myths (*Ol.*, ix. 35), "for to slander gods is a hateful wisdom. Loud and unmeasured words border upon madness.<sup>3</sup> Of such things talk thou not."

The Power controlling the destinies of men, whether addressed as "Zeus" or by any other name, is so clearly to Pindar the Invisible Justice, the power that makes for righteousness, that any "slandering" or misrepresentation of it betokens to him a mind bordering upon madness (*Ol.*, ix. 39).

Pindar's great remedy against this tendency in the human heart is to *consider the end*. Be not deceived by the myths, by what men say. Look to the end. The myths tell us, indeed, he says, that there is "one race of men and one of gods; from one mother (Earth) both draw their breath, yet," he proceeds, "if this be true, there remains, notwithstanding, the unsolved mystery—their strength is wholly diverse; the one, the race of men, is naught; the other, the brazen heaven, abideth, a habitation steadfast for everlasting. Nevertheless," he muses, "something we have like unto the immortals' mighty mind or bodily shape, albeit we know not by day or night what course destiny hath marked out for us to run" (*Nem.*, vi. 1).

This "something," be it the throb of inborn genius or the consciousness of that outward beauty which brought to the Greek an intensity of joy, may not raise up in any mortal breast the "cloud" which shall make him forget that he is "nothing," that he knows not by day or night what the next hour shall bring forth. Therefore, "seek not to become as Zeus; the things of mortals best befit mortality" (*Isth.*, iv. 14, 16). Time with rolling days brings changes manifold; only the children of the gods are free from wounds" (*Isth.*, iii. 18). Toil and trouble, change and vicissitude are the ordinary lot of mortals. "If any have won for himself good things without great toil," says

<sup>1</sup> *Opizomenon*, him who hath the *opis*, the fear of the judgments of God, before his eyes.

<sup>2</sup> Literally, minds that look sideways, askance, away from God.

<sup>3</sup> Literally, play the accompaniment to the tone of madness. In the slandering of the Divine power, madness uses the mind as an instrument—a curious expression, but a very striking one.



the poet, "he seems to many to be the wise man among fools, crowning his life by devices of good counsel, but," he proceeds to add, "the good things are not of his own getting after all. Such things lie not with men. He who orders them is God, who setteth up one and putteth down another" (*Pyth.*, viii. 73).

"Seek not to become as Zeus!" Stories of the divinity claimed by Asiatic potentates must have been rife in Hellas during this period. From such blasphemy Pindar would strive to keep his age-fellows. In his rendering of the myth of Bellerophon is there not a foreshadowing of the fate of one of the noblest of the Hellenes, who in later days allowed himself to be approached with Divine honours? "Unrighteous joyance a bitter end awaiteth."<sup>1</sup> As the winged steed cast off the would-be intruder into things Divine, so a man's own genius deserts him when used against the will of the Most High.

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter, says the Greek poet (*Nem.*, xi. 13) no less than the Hebrew preacher: "If any shall possess happiness and wealth, and surpass others in beauty, and have shown his might in the games, and proved himself the bravest, let such an one remember that *his raiment is upon mortal limbs* and that earth shall be his vesture at the last."

## THE GREAT UNWRITTEN LAWS

It is, we think, quite clear from the foregoing that the unwritten laws which we found in Homer and Hesiod are still alive in Hellas, still written on the hearts of her sons. It will, however, repay us to make a rapid survey of the ground, and see in what way, if at all, the recognition of them in the centuries between Homer and Pindar has altered.

(1) **Reverence for the Great Unseen Power.**—Concerning this no more need be said. We know already that, to Pindar, God is the Source of all things, the Giver of all good.

(2) **Honour due to Parents.**—In no way could Pindar's mind on this subject be better shown than in the involuntary question (*Isth.*, i. 5), "What is dearer to the good than beloved parents?" True, he straightway appropriates the sentiment to express his love for his native city, "Thebes of the golden shield," but that it belongs in the first place to the natural ties is abundantly evidenced from the beautiful setting in the sixth Pythian ode (28 *et seq.*) of the story of the venerable Nestor and his son Antilochus. Pindar tells how in the battle with Memnon, the Æthiopian, the old hero of Messenia was in danger of his life. Sore troubled at heart, he cried out to his son, and his word did not fall to the ground, for the god-like man made stand, and bought with his own death his father's succour. And, therefore, Antilochus was held by the spear-bearing men of that ancient race to have wrought a mighty deed, and to be supreme in the faithful love of a son.

Pindar also, in the same ode (v. 23), brings the honour due to parents into very close connection with the first of all commandments, by repeating with approval the ancient tradition of the charge given by Cheiron to his foster-son, Achilles: Most of all to reverence Kronides, the deep-voiced lord of thunders and of lightnings, and never to deprive parents of like honours through all their spell of life. "Kronides," be it remembered, is Zeus, and Zeus, "to every deep-thinking Greek, is God." Hence the union of the two—reverence to Kronides, and like honours to parents—implies that the latter duty derives its force from the former—is, in fact, a part of religion, that

<sup>1</sup> Literally, sweetness beyond the right.

natural religion which reveals itself in the common assent of mankind, stamped and written upon the heart.

With the foregoing a verse in the fourth Pythian (145), that fresh and delightful ode, may be brought into connection. "If there is enmity between those of the same family," says the youthful hero, Jason, to his father's brother, "the Fates stand aloof, and would hide it for very shame"—out of the *aidos*, that right-minded shame which shrinks from the profanation of what is inherently sacred, as are the family ties.

(3) **The Marriage Bond.**—On this subject we can expect but little light from our poet, owing to the nature of his subject. His ostensible aim is to exalt and crown the victor in contests for which women were unfitted, and from which in some cases they were excluded by law, as at Olympia, and rightly. That women were forbidden under pain of death to be present during the Olympian festival must not be taken off-hand as a token of their social inferiority. On the contrary, it was a wise and necessary precaution. Let any one remember the inevitable accompaniments of the Olympian festival in the ages under consideration, the conditions under which the prizes were competed for, the vast multitude assembled from all parts of the Italian, Asiatic, African and Hellenic world, camping out for four or five successive nights, the excitement (*pace* Pindar), the animal excitement, aroused by contests of physical strength, and he will see that in our poet's glowing eulogies we have the golden side of these festivals only, and that there must have been much from which any pure-minded woman would shrink.<sup>1</sup> Hence, although Pindar has many things to say of the women of the heroic age, the women of his own generation are conspicuous in his pages by their absence. Only from the rarest and briefest touches can we gather anything regarding their status.

So far these touches are satisfactory, and show us the unwritten laws still at work in Hellas. Aristotle tells us (*Pol.*, I. ii. 4) that "woman" and "slave" were synonymous terms among the "barbarians," by which latter complimentary term he means, of course, all non-Hellenes; but that it was not so in Hellas. We know already from our notes on the second unwritten law that the mother, in the eyes of Pindar at least,<sup>2</sup> enjoys equal honour with the father of the family: "What is dearer to the good than beloved parents? (*kednōn tokeōn*)"—parents, that is, as the word *kednōn* implies, cared for, cherished, prized, and valued. And again, "Never deprive parents (*goneōn*) through all their spell of life" of the honour due unto them, as unto God.

And we also remember that the crowning delight of the Pythian games to the youthful victor is the glad return and the sweet smile of joy that welcomes him to his mother's side—a little glimpse into Greek home-life for which we can almost forgive Pindar's hardness in presenting the reverse of the picture—the four defeated striplings shrinking homewards by secret ways, unhonoured and unwelcomed.

Then, again, another "straw" shows us that the singer who had known Corinna, the poetess of his native Thebes, and who had striven (as tradition says) in friendly rivalry with her, was not slow to recognise intellectual ability in others of her sex. He says (*Pyth.*, v. 114) of Arkesilas, king of Cyrene, that he "has wings to soar with the Muses, as his mother before him." It would

<sup>1</sup> Women were not debarred from attending the other festivals of Greece—witness the compliment paid to a Pythian victor in the ninth Pythian ode (97) that many a maiden who had seen him at the yearly festivals of Hellas stood praying silently in her heart that such an one might be her husband or her son.

<sup>2</sup> We venture to think that the subtle distinction made for his own purposes by Æschylus (*Eum.*, 659) between father and mother is not shared by Pindar.



be strange, indeed, if the poet who has so much to say concerning the Muses and the Graces—if he who knows so well the “pure light” (*Ol.*, xiv. 8) of the latter and their refining influence, felt even by the gods—did not know something of the refining influence of cultivated women. But we must be content to leave the matter mainly in the dark. On the home-life of his age Pindar throws but little light.

(4) **Ruler and Ruled.**—Since Homer’s days many and diverse have been the changes and uncertainties of Greek political life. Naturally, Pindar makes more of “the people” than we found to be the case with Homer; but naturally also, as an aristocrat, his sympathies are with the few rather than with the many. Nevertheless, in this, as in all matters, he strives to be just; and justice leads him to see that the people have their rights. He even recognises the hand of God in the changes that have brought the people to the front (*Pyth.*, i. 67, 69 *et seq.*). “By the aid of Zeus Teleios,” Zeus the accomplisher, he says—of him, that is, who ordereth all things for the best—“a man who is chief, and commandeth his son after him, shall give their meed of honour to the people, and so lead them with one accord (*symphōnon*) into the gentle ways of peace (*hēsychia*).”

Pindar, the aristocrat, here acknowledges that the people have their privileges and prerogatives—for this is the meaning of *damon gerairōn*, “honouring the people”—and that it is Zeus the fulfiller who has brought about such a state of things. Only, therefore, by according consideration to their just claims, and only by God’s help, can the ruler hope to “turn” the people so that their voices shall ascend in the gentle symphony of peace, instead of the fierce notes of party strife.

And when this happy state of things has been disturbed, it is, again, God alone who can restore harmony. “It is easy,” says Pindar in the fourth Pythian ode (272), “even for weaker (insignificant) men to shake the State; but, firmly set, to restore it again in its place, this is difficult—a hard task to wrestle with, unless God suddenly come to the leader’s help, and take the helm”—literally, unless God become the steersman of the ship of the State.

Listen, again, to our poet’s idea of the things that go to exalt a State. He praises the city of Corinth by saying (*Ol.*, xiii. 6) that “therein dwell Eunomia, Fair Order, and her sisters Dikē (Justice) and like-nurtured Eirēnē (Peace), sure foundation of States, dispensers of wealth to men, the golden children of wise-counselling Themis (Law), ready to ward off Hybris (Presumption), the loud-voiced mother of Koros (Insolence).”

In this little allegory we have a fresh combination of the lily-flowers—Fair Order is no longer the daughter, but the sister, of Justice, and all three—Justice, Order, and Peace—are “like-nurtured,” *i.e.* descended from one mother, even Themis, who, be it remembered, is not man-made law, but the personification of the great unwritten laws which have come down, from time immemorial, from God.

(5) **Friend and Friend.**—Little also need be said on this score, since great part of Pindar’s mission consists, in his own eyes, in chronicling the achievements of his friends, that they may not go down into the grave unsung (*Nem.*, ix. 6). “There is a saying among men,” he remarks, “that a deed well done should not be hidden in silence in the ground. Fitting for such brave tales is Divine song.” But note! the brave tale is still to be told, even when it rehearses deeds done by an enemy—a sentiment which one would hardly expect to find in the fifth century before Christ, but which, according to Pindar, is still older than himself. “If,” he says (*Pyth.*, ix. 93), “any of the citizens be our friend, or even if he be against us, let him not seek to hide the thing well done (with

toil and pain) in the common cause, despising the word of the old man of the sea. For he bids us give praise with all the heart even to an enemy, when he hath wrought noble deeds, if so be that justice is on his side."

The old man of the sea is the gentle old Nereus, to whom, as to all divinities of the sea, the power of prophecy was attributed. Here we have indeed a foreshadowing of better things, a testimony to the working of a higher and more generous spirit than the surface law of antiquity—the law of retaliation.

As to the rest, "trial," experiment, here as in all else, "is the test" of friendship (*Nem.*, x. 78). "Few are they among mortals that are faithful in trouble, sharers of toil," cries Polydeukes, with hot tears, when he has lost his brother Kastor. And our poet's comment on real friendship is further shown in another passage, where he remarks (*Nem.*, vii. 86) that "if a man stand in need of aught from man," help and assistance, "then may we say that a neighbour who loveth with a steadfast mind is to his neighbour a joy surpassing all."

(6) **The Keeping of the Faithful Oath and Covenant;** (7) **Care for the Stranger and the Suppliant.**—From the nature of the case these laws do not appear prominently in Pindar's pages, but they are there none the less as a deep undercurrent throughout. Zeus is still (*Pyth.*, iv. 296) the "mighty witness of the oath"; he is still (*Nem.*, v. 33; xi. 8) the Father Xenios, watching over the stranger, over host and guest. Nor are these allusions mere imitations of the old epic style, for the keeping of a faithful promise, even in small things, naturally to the man of truth forms part of the white ivory of a noble life, the background to the golden glory of proved worth.

Again, although the open house and the good cheer offered to beggar and wanderer have disappeared with many other accompaniments of the heroic age, yet hospitality and a kindly welcome to strangers are still regarded as duties incumbent on the well-to-do, and figure among the virtues which Pindar specially delights in placing side by side with zeal for the common good and the welfare of the State (*Ol.*, iv. 13; *Isth.*, v. 70).

(8) **The Due of the Dead.**—"Even the dead," says our poet (*Ol.*, viii. 77), "have their share (of honour), if it be paid with due rites," according to the *nomos* or established law.

## THE FUTURE LIFE

We must now turn our attention for a few moments to a passage frequently quoted from the odes; and deservedly, since it is one of the most impressive to be found in Pindar.

"In a brief space," says the poet, "the joy of mortals springeth up, and in like manner it falleth to ground, shaken by a decree adverse."

Creature of a day! What is man? What is he not? Man is the dream of a shadow.

"But when a God-given glory hath come, there abideth a shining light upon men and an age serene."

The eighth Pythian ode (92), in which this passage occurs, is supposed by some to have been written shortly after the momentous battle of Salamis. Hence the "God-given glory" may be taken to signify primarily the defeat of the Asiatic despot by Hellenic valour, and the "age serene" the period of peace which ensued.

The poet's meaning, however, goes deeper still. We shall hardly, with our



knowledge of Pindar's character, be wrong in supposing that the contrast in his verses is drawn not only and merely between one period of human life, or human history, and another, but between the life that now is and that which is to come.

(a) What is man? "The *dream* of a shadow." Observe the intensity of the expression—man is not only a shadow, but the dream of a shadow.

(b) What is man *not*? "Something he hath like unto the immortals." Hence—

(c) When the glory from God hath shined, a bright light abideth upon him, and an age serene—a *meilichos aōn*—a serene eternity.<sup>1</sup>

This is one way of looking at the passage, and even if we render the famous question with some translators as, "What is *somebody*? What is *nobody*?" the contrast is only strengthened. What are the *somebodies* or the *nobodies* of this world? Both alike—with the glory of success or without it—are *dreams of shadows*, absolute nothingness in comparison with that which shall be hereafter—the *aōn*, the eternity of peace.

If the passage stood alone, it might not, perhaps, warrant our drawing so large a conclusion from it, for Pindar is never tired of alluding to "glory" as a sort of immortality, whereby a man lives on with a serene halo about him in the history of his family or his clan or his people. But, fortunately, we are not left in doubt as to the secondary but deeper meaning here—Pindar believed most sincerely in a future life. Like the conception of "sin" and of the great unwritten laws, that of a life beyond the grave has maintained its ground in the hearts of men. Stripped of all the embellishments of his poetic fancy, Pindar's doctrine of the future state may be briefly summed up under four heads:—

- (1) Belief in a judgment passed upon the dead.
- (2) In a punishment in store for the wicked.
- (3) In a life of bliss reserved for the good.
- (4) In a return to mortal life, as the tenants of new human bodies, on the part either of all, or, at the least, of certain souls decreed thereto. The last is probably due to Pythagorean teaching concerning the metempsychosis or transmigration of souls, a doctrine which we shall find later strongly developed in Plato. In our poet it appears most clearly in a fragment which has come down to us and which runs as follows (*Fr.*, 98): "The souls of those from whom Persephone accepteth atonement made for an ancient woe, she restoreth in the ninth year to the sunlight above. From these spring illustrious kings and men swift and mighty in strength and wisdom. And in time to come they are called holy heroes among men."

For the connection of Persephone with the dead, and the pathetic story of her own restoration to the sunlight, we refer the reader to the section on the mysteries. We would only stop here to notice that the souls thus sent back are those that have "made atonement," *i.e.* paid the ransom or penalty, *penē*, for some sin committed in the past, and who have otherwise been presumable men of noble character.

Let us now go on to notice that the fragment quoted above is taken from a dirge. The poet's services, it would seem, were in request, not only in seasons of joy, but in those when sorrow had laid hold upon the heart. Probably the *thrēnoi*, laments, were called forth at different times by the death of some

<sup>1</sup> The word *aōn* may be rendered simply as above—"life," an "age," a "period" of time; but it is akin to *aei*, for ever, and is used in describing the everlasting happiness of those who attain to the islands of the blest (*Ol.*, ii. 120); they enjoy a "tearless *aōn*," *adakrun aōna*—but this *aōn* is eternity.

great chieftain, and written to be sung by a choir or by the women who assembled on such occasions to mourn and beat the breast. Be that as it may, never did the poet scatter his "honey" to sweeter purpose, for he had a distinct message of consolation to convey, and one that, coming from the lips of the man who would not "stain" his song "with a lie," could not fail in its effect. The message that Pindar brought was simply this: Joy, bliss, and happiness *do* exist in the land so far off and yet so near. Let Homer say what he may, *this* is the truth.

We recollect the dark view of the future state which appears in Homer, and which was afterwards so strongly reprobated by Plato as tending to engender an unmanly fear of death (p. 293). We remember Achilles' gloomy remark that he would rather be a day-labourer upon earth than king of all the shades. In the centuries succeeding all this has been changed. The "collective conscience of humanity" has been at work, and, beginning its cogitations in the East, has leavened the thought of the West with this most true perception, that the Supreme Justice so strongly set forth in Homer could not really be *justice*, if good and bad fared alike after death.

Pindar, indeed, does not cast away the old Homeric man, for it appears in the odes;<sup>1</sup> but we venture to think that he regards the condition of the departed in Hades as a sort of intermediate state, in which they await the final judgment. Concerning this the reader must decide for himself; the passage which might be so construed is the following, also a fragment from a dirge (*Fr.*, 96):—

"All by happy fate pass to the other side, freed from toil at last. And in all, the body, indeed, is subject to mighty death; but yet an image (*eidōlon*) of life remaineth, for this only is from the gods. When the limbs stir it slumbereth, but oft to sleepers in dreams it showeth forth the judgment that draweth nigh for weal or woe."

Leaving this debatable ground, however, there is no doubt concerning Pindar's views as to the *ultimate* fate of the good. While shrinking from portraying the wretchedness of the wicked, he brings all the wealth of his genius to the picture of the future life of the blessed. "For them," he says, "the strength of the sun shineth below, while with us it is night; and the space before their city is rich in meadows of red roses, and the shade of the frankincense-tree and golden fruits. And some have delight in horses, some in games of skill, some in the harp; and amongst them bloometh all fair-flowering bliss, and fragrance spreadeth throughout the beloved land as they mingle incense of divers sorts on the far-seen fire of the altars of the gods" (*Fr.*, 95).

Possibly some of our readers may be inclined to condemn the picture as a very "materialistic" view of the things to come? Granted, so far—"First the natural, then the spiritual." The great advance made by the mysteries and by Pindar, following in their teaching, is that they showed the two sides of the future life, and thus did much to obviate the grey, hopeless notions of the Homeric age. We cannot blame Pindar for putting a little colour into his picture. The whole tendency of the passage—horse-racing and games of skill included—is simply a declaration of the poet-prophet to his age-fellows, that each soul deemed worthy would be allowed to follow that pursuit in which he had excelled and found delight on earth. "First the natural, then the spiritual."

But is there *no* spiritual side to the picture? Verily, we think there is. Why are we to take literally all that Pindar says here, and elsewhere alone

<sup>1</sup> e.g. "Haste thee, Echo, to Persephone's dark-walled house!" (*Ol.*, xiv. 20) and similar allusions elsewhere.



give him the poet's licence? When he "sprinkles his honey" on a hero, are we to understand thereby the sweet thoughts of the muse or the product of the bee? When he says that he has "swift arrows" under his bended arm within his quiver, does he mean literal "iron-pointed darts"? The interpretation would be absurd. His arrows, he expressly says in this connection, "have a voice for the wise, although for the multitude they need interpreters." And in the allegorical way we may and must take Pindar's paradise. It appealed to the wise among his age-fellows much as the beautiful vision of old Bernard of Cluny—Jerusalem the golden—touched the hearts of the men of the middle ages, aye, and touches hearts still. It will not be difficult to read a spiritual meaning into Pindar's parable of the "beloved land." The red roses become the "sweet flowering bliss that bloometh wholly there"; the frankincense speaks of oblation; the harp, of praise; the golden fruits are the fruits of life's discipline and self-discipline—proved worth, truth, simplicity, the just mean; the sunlight—to us the sunlight is that which passeth words, the Divine presence—to Pindar it would probably mean the radiance of Divine harmony within the heart. Such are some of the meanings which, without departing from the laws that govern the interpretation of "metaphor" in other cases, may fairly be said to hold good here. Nevertheless it is better not to press the argument—better to say with the poet: "The things of mortals best befit mortality," are best understood by them; and with the apostle: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." The joys of the future life cannot be spoken of by mortal tongue; they are perceived alone by that dim *ahnung* felt by every longing heart, and Pindar only uttered the message sown in his by the Logos Spermatikos—the seed-sowing Word who hath ever been working in the spirits of men—in the form in which it would, or indeed could, be received by his age. "First the natural, then the spiritual."

We may fitly conclude with the description of the islands of the blest, ushered in as it is by that which may truly be considered altogether the most beautiful of the many beautiful passages in Pindar—the thought expressed in the lines which we have placed upon our title-page as most strikingly emblematic of the Hellenic character and mission.<sup>1</sup>

And so we take farewell of Pindar, the sweetest singer of Hellas, the poet-prophet, with his earnest warnings against sin, his noble ideals of life, his deep foretaste of immortality, his unconscious pointing to that most true Light, the Star far seen, the King who, in the form of a noble man, should indeed one day pour into the heart of humanity *eunomia*, fair order of peace.

<sup>1</sup> From E. Myer's unapproachable translation (*The Odes of Pindar*).

## § VIII.—ÆSCHYLUS

WHEN we turn from Pindar to Æschylus we become immediately conscious of passing into another and a different mental atmosphere. Both poets are contemporaries; on both have the events of their age made an impression so deep that they feel themselves called to the poet's office—set apart, as it were, for the express purpose of revealing the thoughts to which these events had given birth. The thoughts of Pindar we already know—none could be sweeter, none nobler. His message is, however, addressed to the individual as such; the message of Æschylus has a longer, grander scope—it is intended for the aggregate of individuals, for society, for humanity itself.

The causes which gave to the odes of Pindar their *raison d'être*, and brought them into existence, left the poet in touch with the outer joyous side of Hellenic life. The man whose task it was to call upon his countrymen to develop every latent power in energetic action, to *prove* themselves heroes, was necessarily not the man to call to a life of introspection, to that searching of the spirit which was wrapped up in the old Greek counsel: *Know thyself*. Let us not be misunderstood here. Pindar, as we have seen, was far, very far, from neglecting this other and deeper side of life; whensoever occasion offered he seized his opportunity and pressed its claims. Nevertheless he did so incidentally and by the way—his mouth, as it were, giving utterance to the fulness of his heart, a fulness which he could not and would not restrain.

Strange it is that the presentation of this other side of Greek life, the reflective, should come to us from one who was himself a man of action to a greater extent than was Pindar. The Theban was obliged to look on (though with an aching heart, as he tells us) at the glorious deeds in which the Athenian actually took part. Æschylus, the greatest tragic poet of Greece—perhaps, considered as a path-breaker, of the world—was also Æschylus, the fighter at Marathon, at Salamis, at Plataea, and it is in the latter character, that of citizen and patriot, that his contemporaries summed up his praises.

Æschylus in his own person represented the brilliant side of Greek life sung by Pindar. He had not "hidden himself in a corner"; his love for the fatherland, his manliness, his *aretē* had been put to the touchstone of trial, and he had come forth as "proved gold" from the furnace. Whatever, therefore, he might have to say to his countrymen was written on the white ivory of truth, stamped with the seal of sincerity and of experience, the experience of one who had personally borne his share in the greatest struggle, and been subjected to the greatest storm, of which it is possible to conceive.

The intensity of the storm undoubtedly affected Æschylus for life. The tremendous shock of the Persian invasion, and the outcome of the shock—reversing, as they did, all human forecasts and anticipations—seem to have opened for him, as it were, a glimpse into the depths of the mysteries which underlie human life. It is impossible for him to view life from the standpoint of Pindar. Such a view for him is too narrow, too restricted. Life to Æschylus is more than the development of the individual as an individual, however grand the ideal of the individual may be. To Æschylus, all true life, every noble life, involves the relation of that life to a higher life, the



subordination of the individual to a higher Will—that Will which governs the great whole of which the individual forms part, and but an infinitesimal part. Only by keeping touch with that higher Will, and in obedience to it, can the individual learn and fulfil his own destiny.

That such a conception should be found among the Hellenes, a nation whose very world-task was the development of individualism, of progress by the experiments of individuals, is a fact so striking that of itself it rouses our astonishment. Æschylus, the apostle of freedom, the poet who says of his countrymen that they “to no man are subject, they are not slaves,” is yet the most earnest upholder of the necessity of subordination, of the doctrine that God “only is free.”

It is evident that the man who could work out such a paradox, who could show his age-fellows five hundred years before Christ that true freedom goes hand in hand with subordination, is a thinker for all time. The attempt, therefore, to follow him in those currents of thought which led to rich results is singularly interesting.

## THE IDEA OF GOD

Incredible as it may seem to those who have accustomed themselves to think of Greek antiquity as wrapped in utter darkness, it is nevertheless true to say of Æschylus that God is seldom absent from his thoughts. To him, as to the chorus in his *Agamemnon*, God is “the Cause of all, the Power that fashioneth all. What happeneth to mortals without Zeus? what is there not decreed by God?” Zeus to Æschylus, as to Homer, to Hesiod, to Pindar, is something more than the Zeus of the myths. He is the representative of that Invisible Justice whose workings man indeed may trace, but Himself is hid from mortal view. “Who,” he asks in the *Suppliants*, “can discern the mind of Zeus, that fathomless abyss?” His will is deed. “Steadfast, unoverthrown in fight, the deed in brow supreme of Zeus ripeneth to completion. Tangled, by darkness overshadowed, stretch the pathways of his thought, impenetrable, inscrutable to mortal sight.<sup>1</sup> From towering hopes to doom he hurleth mortals, nor armeth himself with force thereto, for all without effort doth the divinity effect. A thought alone from holy seats on high at once destroyeth mortal pride.” In the same drama, again, Zeus is hailed as “king of kings, of blessed ones most blessed, mightiest perfecter of perfectness!” So intense is his belief in the one Divine Power that, were it not for the mythical background of his dramas, Æschylus might be ranked as a monotheist. He, like Pindar, however, clings to the old polytheistic ideas, and for the same reason, viz. that they are essential to him in his work. The subject-matter of his tragedies, as of those of Sophocles and Euripides, is taken from the myths and heroic sagas. These represented to a Greek the whole of history, sacred and secular, and the poet was dependent on them for his *hyle*, the material, thus fed by the fire of his genius. That the fire of Æschylus, like that of Pindar and of Sophocles, was a cleansing, purifying flame, is self-evident. If Æschylus cannot, like Xenophanes, abandon the anthropomorphic form, he will at least cause the spiritual to shine through it. If he retains the polytheistic idea—the lords many and gods many who held dominion over his countrymen—it is because in his view this idea is not incompatible with

<sup>1</sup> From the abundance of his metaphors, and the rapidity with which he passes from one idea to the other, Æschylus is often obscure. Here the image “unoverthrown in fight,” borrowed from the contests of the games, is followed immediately by the metaphor of trackless forest. “God’s ways are unsearchable, past finding out.”

the sovereignty of God. He shows his age with unmistakable clearness the result of his own thinking, his own firm belief, viz. that One Hand holds the helm of the world, One Mind guides the affairs of the universe, One God rules over all—to Him gods and men alike are subject.

Other rulers may have preceded Zeus on the world-throne, so say the myths; those powers of nature have passed away, they were imperfect. Zeus alone remains victor—victor necessarily because he is perfection, standing above nature, the world-orderer, intellectually and morally the upholder of the Kosmos.

Not only, however, are the old nature-powers, Uranus, Kronus, the Titans, the Erinyes, subject to him, but Apollo, the great power of Delphi—a real power both intellectually and spiritually among the Greeks, as we have seen—is but the prophet, the mouthpiece, of his father. Never has Apollo on his seer's throne said concerning man, woman, or state what Zeus, the father of the Olympians, had not bidden him say. Athena also, wisdom personified, has received her wisdom from him.

It is noticeable that, in order, as it were, to demonstrate this inherent absolute sovereignty of Zeus, Æschylus dwells with special emphasis on the very myths which Pindar would fain pass over in silence—the myths concerning strife among the immortals. Strife, according to Æschylus, there was; but its cause is the opposition offered by the imperfect to the perfect; and until the imperfect learns to know its own shortcomings, and to recognise the existence of a higher order of things, the strife must continue. Highest wisdom must also be highest might; God must reign until He has put all things, rebellious gods and men included, under His feet. This is necessary in the best interests of the world. When Athena wins the cause of Orestes against the Furies, she exclaims: “Zeus hath triumphed! our zeal<sup>1</sup> for good in all is victor!”

Hence we find Æschylus deliberately choosing subjects which exhibit in the darkest colours this conflict between the imperfect and the perfect, the half-knowing and the all-knowing, the presumptuous and the all-wise. To this subject we must recur shortly. It is full of the deepest interest. Meantime we would ask the reader's careful consideration of one very remarkable passage which embodies well-nigh the whole of the Æschylean theology. It occurs in the first choral ode of the *Agamemnon* :—

Zeus, whoe'er he be, this name  
If it pleaseth him to claim,  
This to him will I address;  
Weighing all, no power I know  
Save only Zeus, if I aside would throw  
In sooth as vain this burden of distress.  
Nor doth he so great of yore,  
With all-defying boldness rife,  
Longer avail; his reign is o'er.  
The next, thrice vanquished in the strife,  
Hath also passed; but who the victor-strain  
To Zeus uplifts, true wisdom shall obtain.

No one who knows the original can fail to admire the skill of the translation here given.<sup>2</sup> If the passage appears at first sight obscure, it is because of its very fulness of thought. The following brief analysis of the original may possibly help us to follow the train of ideas in the poet's mind :—

<sup>1</sup> Lit. *eris*, that contention, competition or mastery, which the Greeks thought so beneficial.

<sup>2</sup> We owe it to Miss Swanwick's admirable *Dramas of Æschylus* (Bohn's Classical Library), from which the other metrical citations in this section are also taken.



(1) The great Power to whom we give the facile name of "Zeus," who is He? I, for my part, hesitate to call Him by this name, but—I know no other.

(2) Pondering all things with myself, I find as the outcome of my thought that there is naught which can be conceived of as above or beyond this Divine Power. To none save Himself may He even be compared.

(3) Reliance on Him alone it is that can enable me to cast aside in very truth the fruitless burden of thought.

(4) The powers of nature have passed away before Him—necessarily, by reason of imperfection.

(5) Zeus alone remains the victor. Whoso recognises that it is the world-orderer, highest wisdom, that wisely orders all things, and uplifts to him the song of victory—that man shall obtain the whole fruit of thought.

Before passing on, we may note that Æschylus, like his predecessors, often uses the word *Theos*, "God," instead of any appellative. This, in his case, is closely connected with the hesitation which we have just noticed in applying the name "Zeus" to the Supreme Being. Nevertheless, as we have seen the same peculiarity in Homer (p. 225) and in Pindar (p. 341), the fact is significant, and points to the national consciousness of a Divine power apart from and beyond the myths—the God of the human heart. Thus, in the *Agamemnon* we have: "Not to be of evil mind—this is the greatest gift of God (*Theos*).” And in the same drama Agamemnon bids his consort, Clytemnestra, receive with kindness the Trojan princess Cassandra, Priam's daughter, now his slave. "For," says he, "God (*Theos*) looks graciously on the victor who uses his power gently. For willingly doth no one bear the captive's yoke." Finally, we may note the significant use of the word in the pregnant thought: "Success! this, among mortals, is God (*Theos*), aye, and more than God." Æschylus is clearly no worshipper of mammon in any shape.

These examples may suffice; it would be easy to add to their number.

Finally, it is requisite to note that Æschylus, like Pindar, retained the myths concerning the Divine lineage of certain heroic families. He, like Pindar, upholds the doctrine of heredity. That the deepest thinker among the Greeks should have believed in the necessity of a union of the Divine nature with the human, before the latter could reach its highest development, is very significant.

It is in this sense, the belief in the influence of heredity, that the myths of Io and Cassandra, as retold by Æschylus, must be read. Both are the objects of superhuman love—Io has been chosen by Zeus to be the mother of a Divine race, Cassandra by Apollo; both resist the offered love—Io fearing the dangers before her, Cassandra preferring an earthly love; both suffer the penalty of their disobedience. Against such anthropomorphic legends, as we know, Xenophanes had earnestly protested. Nevertheless, in the hands of Æschylus, the believer in the union of the Divine and human as the source of great benefits to man, both myths had to his countrymen spiritual meaning.

## SIN

The correlative of a high conception of God is, naturally, a high conception of His requirements. If the Orderer, the Perfecter of the universe be perfect, perfection must reign in every part of that universe. Looking out, then, on the world, and contrasting the perfect order of the Kosmos with the evidence of disturbance in the world caused by man, it is not difficult to

see that life and its problems must have weighed heavily on a mind like that of Æschylus.

Little is known of the poet's history; but one fact is certain, viz. that the seven dramas which have been preserved are all products of his ripest period. The *Prometheus Bound* was probably written in his fiftieth year, the others within the next fifteen years. Hence, in all, we have expressed the convictions of maturity, of a life of thought and experience. Æschylus is no youthful Byron or Shelley, beating his wings within the cage of facts, and striving in vain to escape from it. If he went through any *Sturm und Drang* period, he has long since passed out of it. He has freed himself by the simple observation of life. His experience has shown him that man is the maker of his own cage—the maker, often, of a cage for others. Man, not the Divine Power, is the maker of the misery of the world. That misery to Æschylus is concentrated in the one word *atē* = sin = ruin.

Homer, as we know, also recognised the existence of *atē*, a tendency which, as in the case of his Helen, his Agamemnon, Achilles, Hector even, brought its own punishment with it. In the centuries that have passed, this recognition of sin and its consequences has deepened. To Æschylus, it is the solution of the greatest of all problems—the misery of human lives. He will by no means allow that desolation or ruin can come upon any one merely on account of his own previous happiness or "good fortune," through the "jealousy" of the gods. Such a view of God is impossible to Æschylus. True, he uses the phrase "jealousy of the gods" on several occasions, but the words always represent, not the belief of Æschylus himself, but the current notion of the time, put into the mouth of some one or other of the *dramatis personæ*, as, e.g., that of Agamemnon or of Clytemnestra in the *Agamemnon*, or of the messenger in the *Persians*. The poet's own view was diametrically opposed to the popular notion—sin alone is the cause of woe. "There exists," he says in the *Agamemnon*, "among mortals an ancient saying spoken of old, that the perfect bliss of man bears offspring, nor dies childless; that out of good fortune there buddeth forth to the race unceasing woe. Apart from others," he continues, "I hold a solitary belief: the ungodly act, indeed, brings forth abundantly a race like unto itself,<sup>1</sup> but the destiny of the righteous is that his house shall aye be blessed with loved children." The idea that ancient *hybris*, old, unrepented-of sin, perpetually brings forth new sin, is worked out by Æschylus specially in the great trilogy of the *Oresteia*; but it recurs again and again in the other dramas—sometimes under the metaphor of parent and child, as above, sometimes under that of seed and harvest, as in the *Persians*, where we shall presently meet with it, and in the profoundly significant thought expressed in the *Seven against Thebes*.

"Atē's field<sup>2</sup> yields death for harvest."

Both metaphors may well be compared with the doctrine of the sacred writer.<sup>3</sup>

"When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

Whence did the old poet get these thoughts?

The whole subject of sin and its results is, however, so intimately connected with the ideal of Æschylus and his conception of God as the upholder of the great unwritten laws that it will be best examined in connection with those parts of our investigation. Here we need only say in general terms that

<sup>1</sup> Lit. its own image (*eikota*). Genesis v. 3: "Adam . . . begat a son in his own likeness, after his image."

<sup>2</sup> The field of sin.

<sup>3</sup> St. James i. 15.



Æschylus in his *psēlaphān*, his groping after the truth, has made three very important advances:—

(1) To him sin is not merely the outward breach of the great laws written on the conscience of man; it lies also in the rebellion of the will. This, as we can see, depends closely on the exalted conception of the Divine Being arrived at by the poet.

(2) Then, again, Æschylus has made the startling discovery that sin not only, as we have seen, begets fresh sin, as a parent the child, in the same individual, but that the tendency to sin may actually be inherited, transmitted from one generation to another.

(3) Lastly, he believes firmly that sin is abhorrent to God, as perfection, and that He Himself takes measures to check it, and bring back the erring into the paths of that soberness of thought (*sophronein*, lit. soundness of mind) which the Greeks regarded as the only true wisdom. "Some think," he says in the *Agamemnon*, "that the gods do not deign to pay heed when the grace of holy things is trodden under foot of mortals. This idea is not righteous." If God be perfect, He must take note of sin and punish it; if He be the perfecter, He will complete in men what is lacking in them through ignorance and infirmity:—

"To sober thought Zeus paves the way,  
And wisdom links with pain.  
In sleep the anguish of remembered ill  
Drops on the troubled heart; against their will  
Rebellious men are tutored to be wise."<sup>1</sup>

**Pathos Mathos—Learning by Suffering.**—How strange to find the doctrine in this old-world writer; stranger still is it to find it connected with the dealings of God. The idea is not confined to Æschylus, as we shall presently see. Nay, if we regard Odysseus, the man of many trials as well as of many devices, as made patient by these trials, we may even say that *pathos mathos* is to be found in Homer, like most germs of Hellenic thought. Nevertheless, it is in Æschylus that we first find the teaching set forth in all its depth. "God it is who leads mortals into the way of wisdom. By His decree learning flows from suffering. Yea, even in the slumber of the soul the Divine power can awaken it, and lead it by anguish of conscience, remembrance of past woe, to soberness of thought." *Pathos mathos*—perfection by suffering: this is the necessary supplement of sin and suffering:—

"For justice doth for sufferers ordain  
To purchase wisdom at the cost of pain."

The same thought occurs again in the *Eumenides*: "Profitable is it to become of sound mind by suffering," by *stenei*, literally by straitness, by coming into straits, by the pressure of circumstances—a saying which reminds us of our Lord's description of the strait gate as a *stenē pylē*, and the narrow way as a *hodos tethlimmenē*, or way that hems, and confines, and presses one in, and palls and irks one.

<sup>1</sup> This strophe should be read as the sequel to the two given on p. 362. In the original it follows immediately upon the declaration that the confession of the victory of God as perfection gives "the whole (to *pan*) of thought." We quote them again here that the sequence may be seen.

## THE GREAT UNWRITTEN LAWS

From what has been said of the poet's conception of the might and majesty of Zeus, it follows that, to him, Zeus is still the representative of the Invisible Justice, upholding the laws graven on the conscience of man. No one of the great laws which we have traced in Homer and Pindar is overlooked by Æschylus; but in the dramas which have come down to us several are specially singled out, some as having arrested the attention of the poet by their conspicuous action in the world around him, others perhaps because it seemed to him desirable to impress them more deeply on the minds of his countrymen. These are the laws touching the reverence due to the Divine power, and those concerning the sacredness of the guest-right, the marriage bond, and the suppliant. Lastly, Æschylus promulgates and emphasises a law hardly known as such to Homer—the law of the sacredness of human life. It will become apparent to us, in Æschylus as in Pindar, that the sense of these laws has deepened and strengthened since the age of Homer, and that in like manner the sense of their connection with God is now most intimately felt.

The first of the great laws, to Æschylus as to Socrates, is undoubtedly the reverence due to that Divine power which he so distinctly perceived, and to which he so unwillingly gave the name of "Zeus." We have pointed out that, "pagan" as he is, God is never very far from the thoughts of Æschylus, and perhaps the best proof of this is the way in which he treats that most striking event of ancient history, the Persian invasion. He had himself fought in all the three great battles; his own brother had done the most heroic of deeds at Marathon; the poet had witnessed and himself shared in the sacrifices made by his countrymen—their loss of home and property; he had seen their bravery, the courage of despair. And yet, like Pindar, to none of these causes, neither to heroism, self-sacrifice, nor valour, does he assign the great defeat. He sees the root of that in the attitude of the Persian monarch and of the Persians themselves towards the Divine power.

The keynote of this is struck in the opening of the *Persians*, when Atossa, the wife of Darius and mother of Xerxes, is hailed as "wife of the Persians' god, yea, and mother too." Alexander and the later Hellenes, as we know, followed the Oriental custom in the assumption of Divine titles; but to a Greek of the age of Æschylus such assumptions, and the words in which they found expression, belonged to those which Pindar describes as "bordering on madness." Now the Greeks of this period shrank back from anything that even bore the appearance of a wish to usurp Divine honours, as is seen in the *Agamemnon*, where the king, on his return from Troy, refused to tread upon the magnificent carpet spread for him as victor before the entrance to the palace at Argos. "Honour me," he says to Clytemnestra, "as a man, not as a god."

The presumption which has induced the Persian rulers to arrogate to themselves Divine titles and honours, and the subservience with which these were accorded by the people, would appear to be in the eyes of Æschylus the main cause of their misfortunes. On account of this there has come upon Xerxes a kind of intellectual disturbance, a mental blinding, known by the Greeks as *apatē*. This *apatē* or delusion, personified by Hesiod, was regarded in the light of a visitation sent by the Divine power as punishment for some original *atē* or sin. Herodotus tells us that Xerxes was urged on to the expedition against Greece by misleading dreams, and in repeating this story he probably represents the belief of his age. Æschylus also attributes the belief in the *apatē* to the Persians. Thus, with a foreboding presentiment of the coming misfortune, the



chorus of Persian elders is made to say: "What mortal man can avoid the ensnaring delusion (*apatē*) of a god? Who with swift foot may leap lightly out of the net into which Atē with friendly words has beguiled him? Thence no mortal may escape."

The metaphor of the hunter's net is a repetition in another form of a very old idea. In the *Iliad*, as we remember, Agamemnon tries to excuse himself to Achilles by the myth in which he represented the *atē* as not only a tempting but a constraining power. Atē and Zeus and fate had compelled him to sin. But just as Homer puts his finger on the true *atē* in the "wretched passion" of Agamemnon, so does Æschylus show that the "net" of *Apatē* is of Xerxes' own spinning—the threads are woven by his own presumptuous tendencies. When, in the course of the drama, the shade of Darius appears, summoned from the grave on the arrival of the fatal news at Susa to give counsel in the emergency, the visitor from the other world goes to the root of the matter, and attributes the disaster which has overtaken the Persians to the ignorance and youthful folly of his son. Xerxes has not only defied the gods, but thought to master them. "Is not this," says Darius, "a disease of the mind?" In order to understand fully the presumption of Xerxes it is necessary to look at it from the standpoint of the age. Readers of Herodotus will recollect that the Persian monarch had taken upon himself to chastise the Hellespont. A storm had swept away the bridges constructed to connect the Asiatic with the European coast, and as a punishment Xerxes ordered that the current should receive three hundred lashes, and that a pair of fetters should be let down into it. Ludicrous and childish as the incident appears to us, it had to a Greek a very serious side, for the chastisement of the sea by Xerxes meant nothing less than the chastisement of the power that controls both winds and waves. The act, therefore, indicated that Xerxes, in his own opinion, was superior to the power—master, in fact, of gods and of men.<sup>1</sup>

Lastly, Xerxes or his troops had burned the temples of the gods in Greece. In all three ways, therefore—by assumption of Divine honours, by the folly that claimed to be the superior of the great nature-powers, by sacrilege—Xerxes had drawn down upon himself the Divine vengeance, and ensured his own defeat. He himself says, "A god turned round upon me!" and the Persian elders, after hearing the report of the messenger from Europe, at once exclaimed, "O sovereign Zeus, thou who hast now destroyed the Persian army, the countless land-exulting host, hast hidden Susa and Egbatana beneath a cloud of grief."

No pains are spared by Æschylus to expose the folly of the pretender to Divine honours. We can imagine the ripple of amusement which must have passed over the immense assembly in the Athenian theatre where Xerxes is observed in the hot haste of his flight—unkempt, in garments tattered and torn, and exhibiting, as a proof of what he had suffered, his rags! To the Athenians, who had fought and bled and agonised in the struggle, the scathing

<sup>1</sup> According to Herodotus (vii. 35), Xerxes orders those who administered the flogging to address the Hellespont in these barbarous and presumptuous words: "O thou bitter water, thy master inflicts this punishment upon thee." Xerxes, again, had committed another and, in Greek opinion, equally fatal act in making the canal for the passage of his vessels through the isthmus which connects the promontory of Mount Athos with the mainland. Herodotus declares that the ships could easily have been drawn across the isthmus, and he conjectures that the making of the canal was due to motives of pride; Xerxes wished to leave behind him a monument of his power (vii. 24). In the eyes of a Greek all nature was sacred, and this interference with the existing order of things, bringing water where land had been, was a serious matter, betokening that the author of the deed considered himself wiser than the unseen powers.

exposure of the man who was "in good fortune a hero, in bad" a despicable coward, must have been as a draught of good wine.

If the presumption of Xerxes, however, forms the warp of the net of Apatē, the woof is woven by his ambition. The master of the land would be master of the sea as well; the land of Asia covets Europe also. Such overweening pride must be checked, if the balance of the world is to be maintained. Hence the messenger from the seat of war, after stating to the queen the disproportion between the Persian and the Greek naval powers—the fact that the Persian vessels were in number nearly as four to one of the Greek—adds: "Do we seem to thee the weaker in this battle? Nay, but some god destroyed the army, depressing the scale with unequal fortune."

The memorable words in which the shade of Darius predicts the fate of the forces left behind in Boeotia, and the result of the engagement at Plataea, may be taken as a summary of the poet's own views on the expedition.

"Heaps of the slain shall remain," he says, "yea, even to the third generation, a voiceless witness to the eyes of men that overweening thoughts befit not mortals. For insolence (*hybris*), bursting into bloom, bringeth forth a harvest-ear of sin (*atē*), and reapeth a lamentable crop. Beholding, then, such judgment on these deeds, bethink you of Athens, of Hellas—and let none, despising the present fortune, lusting after other things, throw happiness away. Zeus, the chastiser of presumptuous thoughts, is close at hand, a stern auditor."<sup>1</sup>

Read in the light of the after-history of Athens herself, the warning has a prophetic ring.

**The Guest-Right. The Marriage Bond.**—Turning now to the poet's views on another of the great unwritten laws—the sacred guest-right—we find this, the beginning of all international law, employed even more strongly than in Homer. The moral necessity of the Trojan war, which we gathered indirectly from many passages in the *Iliad*, is boldly proclaimed by Æschylus over and over again in the *Agamemnon*, as a war of extirpation undertaken in a most righteous cause. The Greek heroes had sailed for Ilion at the bidding of Zeus Xenios, god of the guest and host, protector of the hearth, to avenge the breach of hospitality committed by Paris. Long, says the poet, had Zeus held the bow over the head of Paris, that the shaft might not fall before the appointed time, nor yet in vain beyond the stars. Now that Troy is burned, Priam slain, his wife and children carried into captivity, all must confess the stroke of Zeus—clearly may it be traced; what he decreed he hath also accomplished.

As to the part taken by Helen in the great disaster, the poet sums it up in a passage of singular beauty. "There came to Ilion," he says, "a spirit of gentle calm"—calm as the unruffled breezeless sea—"the soothing delight of wealth, soft dart of the eyes, heart-piercing flower of love." But this "gentle spirit" had another side—she was one that "had swerved from the right course, brought a bitter end to wedlock." She came under the escort of Zeus Xenios himself, "bringing ruin to the home and children of Priam, an evil comrade, a bridal guest, or Fury in disguise." In other and equally striking passages the poet emphasises the fruitage of Helen's sin. Not only had she brought destruction to Ilion as her dower, but what misery had she bequeathed to her own people—the turmoil of warriors, the clashing of spears! Each

<sup>1</sup> *Euthynos*. The metaphor is taken from the examination to which all magistrates and other functionaries were subjected in Athens at the expiry of their term of office. The poet implies that the "too-much," arrogated to itself by presumption, leaves a deficit somewhere—is a kind of stolen property, which has to be accounted for.



home knew, indeed, whom it had sent forth to Troy, but who or what returned? Instead of men there reached home a little dust—the precious ashes of the dead, sore-wept. No apostle of peace could more strongly express the horrors of war than does the fighter by land and sea.

The claims of suppliants are set forth most strongly by the poet in the drama which bears their name. He loses no opportunity, however, of enforcing the duty of protection by the stronger party to those in need of it—possibly with a view to that great extension of the power and influence of Athens which took place after the Persian wars. The rights of the suppliant and the fugitive formed, as we have seen, another of the great bases of international law, and, like the guest-right, were under the special care of God. Thus in the *Eumenides*, when Orestes flees to the altar of Apollo at Delphi, the god tells the persecuting Furies that he himself will defend and deliver the fugitive, “for,” he says, “fearful both to mortals and to gods is the wrath of the suppliant,” if he should be betrayed.

**Blood-Guilt.**—It is, however, on the subject of blood-guilt, the sacredness of human life, that one of the most conspicuous differences between the age of Homer and that of our poet is seen. As coming from the “Warrior Bard,” one who had himself shed blood enough in open fight, the teaching of Æschylus is striking. In the *Iliad*, as we have seen, murder may be compounded for by the payment of a fine or ransom (p. 290). The doctrine of Æschylus, on the other hand, is strictly that of the Book of Genesis: “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed; . . . at the hand of every man’s brother will I require the life of man.”<sup>1</sup> “It is a law (*nomos*),” says the poet in the *Choephori*, “that when once the blood-stream hath poured upon the ground, it demandeth other blood.”<sup>2</sup>

“Justice cries aloud, and exacts the debt. Blood-stroke for blood-stroke must be paid. Doer of wrong must suffer.” This he calls a “thrice-hoary saying”—one from remotest antiquity. “When blood hath fallen on the earth,” he asks again, “what ransom may be taken for it? Woe to the desolate hearth! Woe to the home o’erthrown!” “Though all streams poured in one flood to cleanse the guilt from blood-stained hand, they poured in vain.”

This deeply-rooted belief in the sacredness of human life must be borne in mind specially in reading the Orestes Trilogy. It runs through the three dramas like a scarlet thread.

## THE IDEAL OF ÆSCHYLUS

Putting together the poet’s lofty idea of God and his deep perception of sin, it is not difficult to divine wherein his ideal lies. Before the ideals of the individual can even become possible, the world-ideal must become fact, the moral order of the universe must be regained. Hence the restoration of the harmony between God and man—this, and nothing less than this, is the ideal of Æschylus. His conceptions of this vast problem are set forth specially in the *Prometheus Bound* and the great Orestes Trilogy.

In the *Prometheus* we have to contend with a difficulty—the drama is only a fragment, of which we possess neither the beginning nor the end. Æschylus seems to have considered a sequence of three dramas necessary to develop the underlying idea of each tragedy in its fulness. The Prometheus Trilogy

<sup>1</sup> Genesis ix. 6, 5.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Genesis iv. 10: “The voice of thy brother’s blood crieth unto Me from the ground.”

included *Prometheus the Fire-bringer*, *Prometheus Bound*, and *Prometheus Released*. Of these three the middle link only has been preserved; and in estimating its true meaning it is necessary to take as our criterion all that we know of the mind of the poet, as evidenced in his other works. Let us look first at the drama as it stands: a brief analysis of the introduction will help us here.

When the play opens we find ourselves on "earth's remotest plain," a wild and desolate region of the Caucasus. A grand figure appears upon the scene—it is the great Titan, Prometheus, led by two gigantic dæmons, Strength and Force, and followed by the Olympian god Hephæstus (Vulcan). Strength and Force, representing the rabble multitude, are in glee—seldom have they a chance of exercising their talents on such a subject. Hephæstus, on the contrary—type of a higher power, that of Divine knowledge—is overwhelmed with grief.

The object of their presence in this lonely spot is soon apparent. Hephæstus is called upon by Strength to execute the sentence of Zeus without delay, and bind the all-defying Titan with adamantine bonds to the rock—Hephæstus, the god of the arts, must be perforce fulfilled of the decree, for against him has the Titan specially sinned; Prometheus has stolen his very "flower," the radiant flame of fire, whereby all arts are possible, and given it to mortals. "Such are the sins,"<sup>1</sup> says Strength; "for which to the gods he must give satisfaction,"<sup>2</sup> that he may learn to honour the sovereignty of Zeus, and cease from his love of humankind."

"Alas, Prometheus!" rejoins Hephæstus, "against my will must I nail thee, unwilling, to this lonely height, where neither human voice nor human form shalt thou perceive." To suffer here for ages, exposed to fiery sun and winter frost—this is the doom of Prometheus. "Evermore present with thee, the weight of woe shall wear thee out," says Hephæstus, "for thy deliverer<sup>3</sup> is not yet born. This is the fruit of thy love to humankind (*philanthrôpou tropou*). For thou, a god not bowing to the wrath of gods, hast given to mortals honours beyond the right. Hence thou must keep thy joyless watch upon this rock—erect, unsleeping, bending not the knee. Many the sigh, many the moan, which thou shalt pour—in vain; for inexorable is the mind of Zeus, and harsh is every one but newly come to power" (18 *et seq.*). The lamentations of Hephæstus are sternly cut short by Strength: "Dost thou not hate the hated of the gods?" Hephæstus could wish his art accursed before being enlisted in this task; but constraint is upon him: "None is free but Zeus," and, goaded by Strength and Force, he sets to work. The chains are placed around the arms of the Titan: "Strike harder, bind fast, by no means slacken!" urges Strength. "He shall learn, shrewd though he be,<sup>4</sup> his wit is duller yet than Zeus." The iron band is passed around the Titan's chest, the feet are secured, and then the three depart, Strength launching the parting sneer: "Now boast thyself! rob the gods of their meed of honour, and give it to thy creatures of a day. What can thy dying men take from thee of thy sufferings?"

The Titan is left in solitude. No word has he vouchsafed in reply either to the compassion of Hephæstus or the taunts of the attendants. But now—alone—his agony breaks forth. He calls upon all nature—sacred æther, swift-winged breezes, river-founts, the "many-twinkling smile" of ocean's waves, Earth the all-mother, Helios the all-observing sun, to see what he, a god, from

<sup>1</sup> *Hamartia* = failure.

<sup>2</sup> *Dikē* = justice. Justice demands a penalty.

<sup>3</sup> *Lōphēsōn*, lit. he to whom shall be transferred thy burden (v. 22).

<sup>4</sup> Lit. sophist though he be.



gods must suffer. And what has been his sin? "Behold me, miserable, a god in fetters!" he exclaims, "hated by Zeus, detested by all the gods that enter within the hall of Zeus, because I bore a love too great to mortals" (119 *et seq.*). This is the head and front of his offending; this is the sin which has condemned him thus to hang in chains 'twixt earth and æther.

Our glance at these opening lines may suffice to make clear the antagonism on which the drama is built up, the struggle between a world-ruler stern, resolute, not to be moved, and a sufferer whose only crime, on his own showing, is his "too great love for man."

Naturally, Prometheus has our keenest sympathy, not only as champion of the human race, but as the victim of apparent injustice. His indomitable courage, his strength of will, the supremacy of mind visible in physical suffering, all command and gain our deepest admiration. With the ocean-nymphs who come to mingle their sighs and tears with those of Prometheus, we ourselves are filled with indignation at this, as it seems, most monstrous perversion of justice. Such is the effect which the opening of the drama has upon us. Zeus is a tyrant, revengeful, cruel; Prometheus a martyr, noble, grand, suffering in the most glorious of causes, the defence of the helpless.

Here, however, the knowledge of the poet's mind which we have from other sources steps in, and it may be asked: "Can this possibly be the effect which Æschylus, the believer in a God of righteousness, intended to produce?" We reply, Yes! to a certain extent. Æschylus is describing a great contest, and he is too just not to allow the defendant to state the case in his own way, to say all in his own favour that can possibly be said. In this middle drama we have Prometheus' version of the matter. The first drama, *Prometheus the Fire-bringer*, which probably stated the case from the point of view of Zeus, is lost. This is a factor which cannot be overlooked. When Athena appears in the drama of the *Eumenides*, it is as daughter of Zeus, in the character of Perfect Justice. In this character she reminds the Furies—who will not allow Orestes, the accused, to speak—that she has heard one side of the case only. Justice demands that both shall have a hearing. In forming our judgment, therefore, of the *Prometheus Bound*, let us bear in mind that we, too, have heard one side of the case only. Prometheus has told his tale—Zeus is a tyrant, he a victim to injustice. Now let us look at the other side as, from our knowledge of the myth, we can suppose it to have been handled by Æschylus.

Briefly, then, the crime of Prometheus is this:—

(1) He has brought into existence an imperfect, erring race of beings, feeble mortals, creatures of a day. It is Prometheus, not Zeus, who, according to the myths, created man. Prometheus himself—as belonging to the race of inferior deities, said by the myths to have preceded Zeus and the Olympian gods—is not capable of endowing his creatures with a higher nature than his own. As a consequence, his mortals cannot but be defective in the eyes of highest wisdom.

(2) Further, he has taught these mortals the art of cunning. In the old myth of the sacrifice at Mecone (Sicyon), Prometheus sets them the example of trying to outwit wisdom. Hence, by inspiring ephemeral creatures with the notion that they can successfully match their puny faculties against the all-wisdom on high, he has incited them to rebellion, and brought about the inevitable antagonism between heaven and earth. More than this, Prometheus refuses to admit that he has done wrong. When Zeus, foreseeing what this spirit of deceit and rebellion would lead to, resolves that the race of man shall be destroyed from off the face of the earth, to be succeeded by a nobler race of

his own creation, and to this end withdraws from them *fire*, the prop of life, Prometheus, on his part, determines to frustrate the resolve of heaven. He steals fire from the sun, brings it again to mortals, and thus perpetuates frail humankind, with all its sin and all its misery.

Such is the case for Zeus, as set forth in the old Hesiodic myths on which the poet had to work. The words to which we have been listening are the words of a rebel. We turn again to the drama to examine more closely the character of the great Titan, as set forth by himself. Is there any indication, on *Prometheus' own showing*, that his condemnation and punishment are just? As the development of the drama proceeds, we are not left in doubt as to this. Prometheus himself reveals his character to us.

(1) We are startled to find that what he most plumes himself upon is his subtlety, his cunning. The other Titans, he tells his confidantes, the Oceanides, trusted to their strength in the contest with Zeus. Not so he! Warned by his mother Earth, he took refuge in the wily arts (206).

He knew that "neither force nor violence availeth aught; by guile alone do victors hold the rule" (212).

(2) We notice further, on looking back, that Hephæstus and the messengers of Zeus do not speak of the Titan's love to humankind as *philanthropia* proper, but as a "philanthropic way," a "sort" of philanthropy, *philanthrōpou tropou*, twice repeated (v. 11 and 28). This may mean, of course, a philanthropic habit; but we venture to think that the inference drawn above is, from the context, legitimate. Can it be that Prometheus has not in reality proved so true a friend to man as he conceives to be the case? Let Prometheus himself answer the question. Here are the benefits which he first and specially singles out as his own boons to men (248, 250):—

"Mortals I hindered from foreseeing death."

And how has he accomplished this?

"Blind hopes I planted in their breasts."

Irresistibly we are reminded of the dialogue in the first book of the Hebrew Scriptures, where one who also prides himself upon his subtlety says, "Ye shall not surely die . . . ye shall be as gods."<sup>1</sup>

Prometheus goes on to describe in detail all that he has done for mortals (442 *et seq.*). He found them, he says, burrowing in holes in the earth, and taught them how to make to themselves dwellings, how to pass to and fro in ships, to yoke the beast of burden, to work the precious metals. Not only this, but he it is who gave them numbers and letters, taught them to observe the stars, gave them the means of healing disease, nay, even showed to them the import of the omens of the gods—gave them a kind of religion. The long list of his benefactions he brings thus proudly to a close: "To sum the whole in one short word, learn that all arts (*technæ*) came to mortals from Prometheus" (505).

Ay, but there are things more important still to mortals than even *technæ*. Has Prometheus taken thought for justice, manliness, reverence, for good faith, for spotless truth, the white flower of a blameless life? There is no answer. Such things are beyond Prometheus' ken. The great unwritten laws have no voice for him. His aim has been to make his mortals clever, ingenious, skilled in all manner of *technæ*, of "craft" in the double sense, full of blind hopes, and oblivious of their destiny. This is the "philanthropic way" of Prometheus.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Genesis i. 4, 5.

<sup>2</sup> That Prometheus had omitted the nobler qualities in the making of his creatures was the meaning read into the myth in antiquity. Horace says that the Titan had borrowed the properties wherewith he endowed his mortals from all the animals (*Carm.*, i. 16, 3).



Well may Oceanus, the prudent old god who comes to offer his intervention, say to the unfortunate Titan (309): "Prometheus, know thyself!" Look well into thy much-vaunted love for humankind, and see if it be perfect, if nothing be wanting to this thine ideal of humanity. "Adopt new 'ways' (*tropos*)," he adds. Harmonise thy ways into conformity with the ways of wisdom, against which thou dost rebel.

(3) Then, again, the lofty opinion which we had formed of Prometheus himself receives another shock when we find him abandoning the noble reticence of the opening lines—craving for sympathy, recapitulating his own good deeds, lamenting his fate, and exulting loudly over the downfall and ruin which he believes to be impending over his adversary.

"Thus," he says, "do I requite, as is meet, scorn for scorn." Might he but see his foes in like plight with himself! He hates, not Zeus only, but all the gods. If it be madness to hate foes, "then," he says, "let me be mad!" (970 *et seq.*).

"Ah! you object; this is quite natural. What could one expect?"

Say rather, what could a Greek of the fifth century B.C. expect? But we who come later in the day have another ideal in our mind. We, too, have our great Sufferer hanging 'twixt earth and æther, martyred, crucified, by injustice; but we listen in vain for one word of reproach or complaint or boasting or revenge from Him. He, knowing that He came from God and went to God, that He Himself was God, "held His peace, and answered nothing." "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do."

The belief in the impending downfall of Zeus it is that gives the Titan strength to persevere in his resistance. Prometheus supposes that he is in sole possession of a secret which could avert the catastrophe. He imagines in his ignorance that not Zeus but the Fates are the actual rulers of the universe, and that wisdom, highest orderer, must bow to their decrees (516, 518). Nature, in his opinion, is greater than God. Hugging himself with this blind hope, he resolves to wait until Zeus shall have passed away like his predecessors, Uranus and Kronos.

Of course, in the Æschylean version of the myth, this supposed "secret" would be known to Zeus as the all-wise. Nevertheless, in the drama the revelation of it is demanded from Prometheus as a token of submission. This submission the Titan will not give—Zeus must yield to him, not he to Zeus. Hermes, the herald of Zeus, who has been sent to reason with him, warns Prometheus that, if he persists in his rebellion, a terrible fate awaits him. He will be imprisoned within the heart of the mountain; not till ages have elapsed will he be restored to the light, and even then his punishment will continue, for the winged dog, the eagle of Zeus, shall prey day by day upon his liver,<sup>1</sup> until, in the far-distant future, a god shall appear, *the successor of his woes* (1027), willing for his sake to descend into sunless Hades and the gloomy depths of Tartarus.

Still the all-defying Titan will not yield. "Let Zeus do his worst," he retorts; "he cannot kill me!" (1053). He is taken at his word, and the drama ends with the crashing of the earthquake which announces to Prometheus that his doom is sealed, "for the mouth of Zeus knoweth not lies—every word he bringeth to completion" (1032).

Of the contents of the lost sequel, the *Prometheus Released*, we can form at least some estimate. Prometheus finds, as time rolls on, that his own "blind hopes" are not realised any more than are those which he gave to mortals. Death overtakes them; the empire of wisdom does not pass away. He begins,

<sup>1</sup> Among the Greeks the seat of the passions.

by slow degrees, to perceive his folly, that he is injuring no one but himself; and in this discovery he is confirmed by the appearance of his brother Titans, who have been released from Tartarus.<sup>1</sup> Zeus consequently cannot be the malignant being he had pictured. When long ages of suffering have subdued Prometheus, the promised deliverer, Hercules, the son of Zeus by a mortal mother, appears, and stays the destroying eagle. Still another condition remains to be fulfilled before Prometheus can be released—an immortal being, willing to submit to death, to descend into Hades, for the rebel's sake, must be found. This obstacle is removed, old Cheiron offers himself, and Prometheus is free. Doubtless, also, we may suppose that in the Æschylean version the restoration of Prometheus includes the restoration of his mortals—that Zeus takes them into his favour and bestows upon them those nobler spiritual qualities which they can neither gain for themselves nor obtain through Prometheus. This, at least, is Plato's reading of the myth. In the *Protagoras* he says that Prometheus taught men the arts of Athena and Hephæstus (the *technæ* before mentioned), but that Zeus sent Hermes to teach them reverence and justice. We may conclude, therefore, that this was also the idea of Æschylus.

The Prometheus of Æschylus is undoubtedly one of the grandest conceptions of the human mind. The parallel between the rebellious Titan and the fallen archangel of Milton will occur to every reader. Morally, both on their own showing stand condemned—intellectually, by the triumph of will-power, supernatural in its strength, over physical anguish, both extort our admiration no less than our interest and pity. Prometheus, however, is chiefly interesting to us as offering one of those "unconscious" types of which the highest Greek thought—that thought which in its groping succeeded now and again in "touching" God—is full.

(1) Prometheus the rebel is no fallen angel. He is the Greek Adam, the perpetuation of an imperfect and sinful race—a race blind to its own defects, filled with false hopes, turning its eyes from its destiny, and satisfying itself with the *technæ* of material ambitions. Strong in the blindness of its folly, defying its God, refusing to confess itself in the wrong, to submit itself to the "ways" of highest wisdom—it nourishes with its heart-blood those passions which are the very causes of its ruin.

(2) But Prometheus the sufferer, Prometheus the champion of man, is also the second Adam, the "successor to the woes" of the first, bearing the punishment of the human race, and "lifted up" as its representative 'twixt earth and æther. This second Adam is also in Himself that deliverer, that "burden-bearer," who appeared in the fulness of the times. He, "born of a woman," is that God who was both willing for the sake of man to submit Himself to death, to descend into Hades, and who also Himself destroyed the destroyer, the passions which were draining man's heart-blood at its very source.

The grand myth of Prometheus in the hands of Æschylus may fitly be placed, not only by the side of Pindar's deep and beautiful presentment of the love of the Divine Brother, but also as an unconscious prophecy by the side of the prediction of the sibyl. To use once more Plato's words: "God taketh away the mind of poets, that we may know that He Himself is speaking to us through them."

What teaching, however, did the poet consciously intend to set before his own age in the great Promethean Trilogy? The Prometheus of Æschylus is, we venture to think, an emblem of his countrymen, the Athenians, with their intellectual and artistic fire, their grand achievements, their experiments in

<sup>1</sup> The Titans form the chorus in *Prometheus Released*.



all the arts and refinements of life. That Æschylus, an Athenian, should undervalue these is impossible. He sees, however, not only these, but the coming dangers—the growth of the spirit of sophistry, the impatient desire to throw off the yoke of the invisible justice, the craving to make man alone the measure of man, the tendency to worship “success” as God, “yea, and more than God.” Against all this the grand figure of the Titan keeping his lonely watch upon the rock looms forth, a silent warning:—

Athens, know thyself—thy limitations.

## THE ORESTEIA

The *Oresteia*—a trilogy consisting of three dramas, *Agamemnon*, the *Libation-pourers*, and the *Eumenides*—affords an example of moral evil working out its consequences as an inheritance transmitted from one generation to another. Just as certain physical tendencies—e.g. the consumptive or the rheumatic diathesis—may be handed on to offspring, so in the view of Æschylus (and, it may be remarked, of Sophocles also) may some moral taint—the tendency to anger or violence or unrestrained passion—descend from father to son.

As has been well said, this theory approximates closely to the Christian doctrine of original sin (Schmidt, *Eth.*). With the Greek poets, however, the examples of the tendency are confined to two families, those of Atreus and Laius. The legends connected with both were favourite subjects with the Attic poets. Both were treated by Æschylus, but space forbids us attempting more here than a very brief summary of the *Oresteia*. For all details of the legends involved, we refer the reader to our companion volume.

The chain of sin in the family of Atreus may be taken as beginning with his grandfather, Tantalus; it passes to the son of Tantalus, Pelops, and thence to his two sons, Atreus and Thyestes. Jealous of the honour which his brother gains in being called to the throne of Mycenæ, Thyestes robs Atreus of the affections of his wife, and also of a golden lamb, symbol of the wealth in flocks of the new ruler. Atreus, on his part, prepares a terrible revenge: he slaughters two of the sons of Thyestes, invites the father to a banquet, and sets before him his children's flesh, of which, all-unknowing, Thyestes partakes. When he discovers the horrible nature of the repast, he utters a curse upon Atreus, which is referred to in the *Agamemnon* (1598) as the direct cause of the ruin of the house. Atreus dies and is succeeded by his son Agamemnon, represented even in the *Iliad* as violent and haughty in temper. Before the *Iliad* opens, however, Agamemnon has already contributed his quota to the family sin by the sacrifice of his innocent daughter Iphigenia. By this act he has laid up for himself the deepest hatred of his consort, Clytemnestra. During his long absence at the siege of Troy, she plans his destruction with Ægisthus, the remaining son of Thyestes, who as brother of the murdered children himself has wrongs to avenge on the line of Atreus.

The *Agamemnon* of Æschylus describes the revenge of Clytemnestra. She murders her husband, with every accompaniment of treachery, on the very day of his triumphant return as victor from Troy. Thus one horror succeeds another, springing from its predecessor “naturally” as a plant from a seed, a child from its parent.

This tendency, constantly reappearing in each generation, is known as the Alastor, or avenging spirit of the race. It both demands satisfaction for the blood-guilt already incurred, and incites to fresh crimes. The Alastor is, therefore, a destroying as well as an avenging spirit. When Clytemnestra

appears before the elders of Argos, glorying in the murder of Agamemnon, she justifies her action, first of all, as *themis*, sacred right (1431). She has only done what strict justice demands in slaying the slayer of the "sweet bud," Iphigenia. But she has also another excuse for the deed. It is not she, but the old fierce Alastor of the race in her form, who has offered this new victim, Agamemnon, in satisfaction for the murder of the children by Atreus, his father (1500).

Had Clytemnestra been a woman pure and good in other respects, the terrible justification of her deed—the outraged feeling of a mother—might have held good. In her mouth, however, both this and the excuse of being urged on by the Alastor are as false as was the pretext of the compelling Atē put forward by Agamemnon himself to Achilles (see p. 288). Clytemnestra has dishonoured her husband, Ægisthus has usurped his throne; the death of Agamemnon is, therefore, a necessity to the guilty pair. How, then, is the progress of the evil tendency to be stayed? How may the entail of sin be cut off?

Only by the appearance in the race itself of a true avenger, that is, of one who shall punish the wrong from a pure motive. This faithful avenger is found in Orestes, the son of Agamemnon. No sooner has he arrived at man's estate than he is commanded by the Delphic Oracle to avenge his father's death—a command which, in its accomplishment, forms the subject of the second drama of the trilogy, the *Chæphoroi*, or *Libation-pourers*.

In the terrible commission given to Orestes the psychological interest of the whole centres, for the decree that the murder of Agamemnon should be avenged involves not only the death of Ægisthus, who has usurped the throne of Mycenæ, but of Clytemnestra. *The son is called upon to slay his mother*. Orestes is thus placed in the most agonising position possible to be imagined, and we ask again, as we asked in regard to the punishment of Prometheus: How can Æschylus, the believer in a God of righteousness, justify such a command?

The answer can only be found by looking at the story as the poet himself was obliged to look at it, as it had come down to him, with its natural background, the social conditions of the heroic age. In that age, as we have seen, the king is the centre and fountain of justice, and as such hedged about by Divine right. Not only this, but he holds office as patriarch of his people—his functions have been derived from the sacred institution of the family. Orestes, therefore, is called upon to avenge the murder, not merely of his own father, but of the shepherd of the host—patriarch, priest, and king. The matter is not one of private concern. From the position of Agamemnon, it is lifted up altogether out of the narrow circle of the family, and becomes one of national importance. If Agamemnon's murder go unpunished, justice will be shaken to its very foundations—the solidarity of the family and of the greater family of the State are alike imperilled.

Who, then, is to punish the murderers? Again the customs of the heroic age must give the answer. Legal courts of justice do not exist, hence the avenging of blood devolves, as the most sacred of duties, on the nearest of kin. Orestes is the man. There is no way of escape for him. If he disregards the Oracles which have summoned him to the task, he is himself threatened with a penalty so fearful, so heart-freezing, that he shrinks from rehearsing it (*Ch.*, 1032). He is required to sink all natural feeling, and to think of nothing but the duty which devolves upon him of executing judgment.

If we add to these considerations the poet's own belief in the sacredness of human life, we can see that in no other way can the problem be solved, and



yet no complication more terrible can be conceived. The kindred demand made upon Hamlet sinks into insignificance beside this, for Hamlet is expressly told to spare his mother, while punishing the partner of her sin (*cf.* Schmidt, *Eth.*). The two cases differ, again, in this, that the great element of publicity is wanting in Hamlet's case. No one except Hamlet himself suspects the queen of complicity in murder, whereas Clytemnestra has openly exulted in her crime, and must openly pay the penalty for a deed which is known to all Greece. The blood of Agamemnon cries aloud for vengeance. To spare Clytemnestra is, in the interests of justice, impossible.

The problem before Orestes resolves itself, therefore, into a conflict of duties: on the one hand, there is the Divine command, given in the interests of human society; on the other, natural and right feeling, the *aidos*, the reverence due to a mother. Which of the two duties is the higher?

The answer to this question is supplied by the poet. When Orestes comes face to face with Clytemnestra, his resolution fails him, and he turns piteously to his faithful friend. "Pylades, what shall I do?" he says; "shall I reverence my mother, and spare her?" The answer is prompt:—

"Choose all for foemen, rather than the gods."

Orestes dares hesitate no longer—the terrible deed is accomplished; but so great has been the mental conflict that he falls immediately into madness (typified by the persecution of the Furies), and flees distraught from Argos to seek the protection of Apollo at Delphi.

The last drama of the trilogy takes its name from these gruesome powers of nature, the Erinyes or Furies, who, in the course of the action, are transformed into Eumenides, "gracious, well-disposed beings." The Erinyes usually represent, no doubt, the pangs of conscience, torturing the guilty; but this explanation cannot apply to the case of Orestes. His madness is not caused by remorse, but by anguish—the mental agony through which he has passed. Orestes is not morally guilty of murder; his mother's death is due to the command of Apollo, and the god himself accepts the responsibility for the deed (*Ch.*, 1027; *Eum.*, 84). Moreover, the slaying of Clytemnestra springs from no mixed motive. Orestes says, indeed, in the *Chæphoroi* (301) that he is urged on by poverty as well as by the god's decree and his father's woe; but the death of Ægisthus alone would suffice to restore the son of Agamemnon to his lawful inheritance, and place him on the throne of Argos. The removal of his mother, therefore, is not *necessary* to this end, and Orestes stands acquitted of any lower motive than obedience to Apollo.

The Furies cannot see this, however. They represent the letter of the law, the blind unreasoning adherence to custom which refuses to look beneath the surface, and is absolutely incapable of weighing motives. Orestes undergoes all the usual rites of purification, and is under the special protection of Apollo. Still the Furies haunt him; they will not give up their rights over the matricide (*Eum.*, 260 *et seq.*): Apollo resolves to refer the matter to an impartial judge. The controversy between the letter and the spirit of justice shall be decided by Athena. Orestes is, therefore, commanded to repair to Athens, and place himself as a suppliant under the protection of the goddess. He obeys, flees to Athens, and takes refuge in the temple of Athena. Here the Furies find him, clinging to the image of the goddess. They immediately surround him in a circle, chanting the terrible words which, inaudible to others, drive him to madness.

Irresistibly we are reminded again of another trial-scene, where a poor creature, laden with sin and misery, also crouches in the midst, surrounded by a ring of eager, cruel, malice-breathing faces. She has no image to cling to

for protection, but cling she does to Him to whom, as umpire, they have brought her, and from whose lips there fall presently the heart-convicting words: "Let him that is without sin among you cast the first stone at her."

The goddess appears, and in the magnificent scene which follows, our concern for the fate of Orestes is almost forgotten in the intensity of the interest roused by Athena herself. Transformed and irradiated by the deep thought of the poet, the Homeric goddess appears as the brightest and most beautiful type of the Divine wisdom and mercy ever presented to antiquity. With the utmost tact, before the trial opens, she unfolds the great principles on which all true justice is based:—

(1) *No one*, she says (413), *may be judged by appearances*. He may be blameless. She herself will not speak unkindly even of the Furies, until she knows more concerning them.

(2) *Motives must be taken into account*. "Was he not urged by some constraining dread?" she at once says in reply to the vehemence of the Furies (426).

(3) *Both sides must have a fair hearing*. To the Furies, who refuse to allow Orestes to speak, she says quietly, "Thou desirest to be thought, rather than to be, just" (430).

So clear and impartial is the reasoning that the Furies themselves are forced to acknowledge her as a worthy arbiter. When Athena has heard the story of Orestes, however, she declines to try the case alone. It must be referred to the "collective conscience of humanity,"<sup>1</sup> represented by a jury of Athenian citizens, men of faithful oath. Twelve men are empanelled, the case proceeds, and Apollo himself appears to defend his suppliant. The Furies state the crime, Orestes replies, and Apollo openly declares that he had given the decree for the death of Clytemnestra, as the mouthpiece only of Zeus, highest orderer. The votes of the jurors are taken and found to be equal; the "collective conscience of humanity," that is, cannot solve the question. But, by the casting vote of Athena, as Minerva, Orestes is *acquitted*. The spirit has triumphed over the letter, the Divine wisdom shows itself as mercy rejoicing over judgment, the power of life has vanquished the powers of death.

Many commentators appear to see in the *Oresteia*, culminating as it does in the grand scene on the rock at Athens, only the purpose of the poet to glorify his native city and the beneficent laws and institutions which had put an end to the blood-feuds of early days. Others, again, would designate it as an attempt merely to rehabilitate the venerable court of Areopagus, threatened by the progress of democracy. Both *motifs*, we readily grant, must have been, and were, present to the patriotic and conservative mind of Æschylus; but we shall surely err if we thus narrow and dwarf the poet's intention to any merely local and temporary aim. The *Oresteia* does not stand alone. It must be viewed in the light of all that we know about Æschylus, and in this light it undoubtedly is a contribution to the working out of his grand ideal, the restoration of the world-order, the upholding of the moral balance of the universe. If this balance is disturbed in any way whatever, it must be redressed. Yea, though the offender were a god himself, he must be subdued—for the sake of the creatures of a day whom he has deceived he must be subdued—this is what Prometheus tells us from his rock. Is the cause of the disturbance the overweening presumption of a potentate? that potentate must be humbled—for the sake of the nations, by Him who weighs all nations in

<sup>1</sup> Bensen's *Gott in der Geschichte*. See further Miss Swanwick's admirable *Introduction to the Trilogy*.



His balance, he must be humbled—this is the lesson of the *Persians*. Are the great unwritten laws outraged? is the blood of one—uniting in himself the offices of father, priest, and king—poured out upon the ground? that blood must be avenged. Yea, though the task bring with it consequences the most tremendous, it must be performed in vindication of eternal justice, for the sake of human society.

Such is the feeling of Æschylus—definite, resolute, unflinching. We shrink from its sterner aspects; but the lesson is there, writ large, that he who runs may read. Through all grades and ranks of thinking life, from mortal man to intelligences superhuman, the world-harmony must be preserved; if broken, it must be restored, *at any cost, at any price*. In the case of Agamemnon, the cost is a mother's blood; in the case of Xerxes, the lives of thousands of innocent victims; in the case of Prometheus, the descent of a divine being into Hades, the voluntary submission to death of one, himself immortal.

And the results as set forth and implied by the poet are not unworthy of the sufferings. The ideal realised, the balance restored in home and state brings with it *eunomia*, fair order of law; the balance restored among the nations gives freedom to Hellas and *hēsychia*, restful calm; the balance restored in heaven brings to man justice and reverence, the *aidos*, the true life basis, the rock whereon he may build up the *technæ* of the arts, and delight himself to his heart's content in the intellectual fire of Prometheus.

We may now pass from the grand world-ideal of Æschylus to those more limited ideals, the aims which he set before himself and others as individuals, and which made him what he was as a man. These ideals are reality *versus* sham, true freedom, true patriotism. Wide as is the ground, a very brief survey must suffice.

(1) **Sincerity.**—To Æschylus the man of action, no less than to Pindar the singer, truth is the white ivory on which all noble deeds must be engraved. This is abundantly evident throughout the writings that have come down to us. Let us look specially at one memorable passage. It occurs in the *Seven against Thebes* (375 *et seq.*). The messenger is giving his report to Eteocles, the besieged prince, and describing the princes of the hostile league as they come up in succession to the seven gates of the city. All are in full pomp of war, with nodding plumes and shields, whereon are inscribed signs fearful and wonderful, designed to strike terror into the hearts of the beholders. On one is a torch-bearer with the device, "I shall consume the city"; on another a man climbing a scaling-ladder planted against a tower, shouting the war-cry, "Ares himself throws me not down"; on a third was to be seen the fire-breathing dragon Typhon; on a fourth the sphinx, the old man-devouring enemy of Thebes.

None of these are to be feared. Ares (war) alone is their god; their cry is rage, their flame murder.

Finally there appears upon the scene one singled out from all the boastful crew by his simplicity: he bears no sign upon his shield. It is the seer Amphiaraus. "Him," says the messenger (568, 592 *et seq.*), "I call the wisest man, the strongest, and the best. . . . *For not to seem the best he willeth, but to BE it.* From the deep furrows of his mind there springeth noble fruit, wise counsel. Against him it behoves thee, prince, to send men skilled and brave, for he is to be feared who fears the gods." Note the connection between the two verses:—

"He willeth to BE, not seem, the best"—*aristos*, the first in justice, in valour, in all *aretæ*.

"He is to be feared (*deinos*) who fears the gods."

Reverence for the invisible justice (*sebas*) is that deep-ploughed field whence springs the *aristeia*, the reality of excellence, the fulness of wisdom and valour.<sup>1</sup> To BE and not to *seem*! A much-needed lesson, for "seeming" is very closely associated with one of the Hellenic natural characteristics, that thirst for "glory" which we have so often traced. From *dokein*, "the seeming to be somewhat," springs *doxa*, "glory," literally the opinion formed of any one by his fellows, by those, that is, who can only judge from appearances. Hence the emptiness of *doxa* to a man of reality like Æschylus. To "appearance valour," or, as we may term it, sham or "surface valour," and to "surface justice" he is as strongly opposed as Socrates is later to surface or "appearance wisdom."

Like Pindar also, Æschylus is a man of direct speech. When Io implores Prometheus to unveil to her the future she begs him not to deceive her out of compassion, "for," she adds, "words garbled are of all ills the worst."

(2) **True Freedom.**—In the opening scene of the *Persians* (176 *et seq.*), Atossa, the mother of Xerxes, relates to the Persian elders who form her council a dream which she has had during the previous night. In her vision the queen beheld two maidens richly dressed, the one in Persian, the other in Doric garb. Nobly-distinguished in form, faultless in beauty, they are sisters of the same race; to one destiny has given for home the barbaric land, to the other Hellas. The maidens seem about to enter into strife with one another, when Xerxes, perceiving this, straightway holds them back, soothes them, and throwing the yoke over both their necks, fastens them to his chariot. One of the maidens exults with pride in being thus compelled to own a master, and keeps her mouth submissive to the reins; the other, resenting the indignity, struggles to be free—with both hands she rends asunder the trappings of the car, and, bridleless, drags it with force behind her, breaking the yoke in twain. Xerxes falls; his father Darius suddenly stands by his side in grief, and at this sight the would-be conqueror tears his robes. The overthrow of the charioteer who sought to yoke, not Asia only, but Europe also to his car, is complete.

Such, in the poet's vision, was the attitude of the little land when the Persian came down like a wolf on the fold to "throw the yoke of bondage over Hellas" (50). The portrait is the counterpart of Pindar's Hēsychia, gentle Peace, rousing herself with the strength of righteous indignation to cast Presumption into the depths of the sea.

But is Hellas always to be this restive maiden, plunging, struggling, resisting, refusing to take the bit into her mouth, breaking the harness, shattering the car of the State, and throwing out its occupants? Is this the poet's ideal of freedom? We who know the mind of Æschylus answer at once: Nay, verily! If it be true, as the Persian elders inform Atossa, that "the Hellenes to no man are slaves, to no mortal are they subject" (242), there is yet a higher than mortal man to claim allegiance, even the law, and a higher than the law to watch over its fulfilment, even the invisible justice. To him who believes in the world-order licence is not liberty, freaks of caprice performed at will do not constitute freedom. True freedom is something very different; it corresponds to that which follows the indignant uprising of Peace—*eunomia*, fair order of law, reign of law. Pindar the bard, Æschylus the warrior, preach here but one doctrine and the same: there is no true freedom, no true peace without subordination, *eunomia*.

<sup>1</sup> We may remark in passing that the field of reverent fear, with its noble fruits, reality and strength, is here evidently contrasted with that other field whose fruitage of woe we have already noted; for the verse, "Atē's field (the field of sin) bears death for harvest," occurs almost directly after in the reply of Eteocles to the messenger.



The views of Æschylus are best set forth in the words uttered by Athena in founding the Areopagus, that venerable court with power of life and death, which, in the poet's time, was threatened with destruction.

In the tribunal held on Ares' rocky hill, says the goddess (*Eum.*, 690 *et seq.*), "Reverence (*sebas*) and Fear shall of the townfolk be the sisters, and guard against injustice night and day, if so be," comes the warning, "that from the laws the citizens depart not. Pure water, when it runs through mud, becomes defiled, and where then shalt thou find to drink?"

"Neither to be without rule, nor by tyrants ruled! this is my counsel for my people. Nor let them banish from the city sacred awe, for who of mortals that feareth naught abideth just?"

Hear, again, what the intrepid fighter at Marathon has to tell us concerning awe.<sup>1</sup> There is a place, he says (*Eum.*, 516), where awe is noble; within the heart it should be seated, there abide, and keep its watch. Good is it through suffering to learn wisdom. "Who," he asks, "man or State, that with light heart cherished not holy awe—who, in such case, did ever reverence justice?" Then again comes the warning:—

"Neither the life unrul'd nor tyrant-sway shalt thou approve. In all things do the mean; God giveth strength."

Here we have once more the old Hellenic doctrine. Æschylus, no less than Pindar, is the prophet of the mean, the just mean. True freedom, like true peace, is upheld alone by walking in the paths of simplicity, avoiding the *too-little*, the non-rule, non-discipline, which ends in anarchy, and equally the *too-much*, which has its roots in the *hybris* of presumption and ends in tyranny. "A fitting, measured word<sup>2</sup> it is that I proclaim," concludes the poet. "Presumption (*hybris*) is of ungodliness the veritable child; but from sound mind there springeth bliss, much longed for, dear to all."

(3) **True Patriotism.**—It is hardly possible for us in these cosmopolitan days to realise what the State was in antiquity. We come nearest to a conception of all that was wrapped up in the word *politēs*, citizen, when we analyse our own word wretch, for "wretch," when it was coined, meant simply "an exile," one banished from his native land. Such an one was indeed "wretched"; he had no home, no avenger, no rights—against him any man might turn with impunity. Within the shelter of the State, on the other hand, his position was at least defined, secure. His back defended by her institutions, the patriot citizen could confront the world as foe. Hence to the State, his mother, were due not only the gratitude of each citizen, but his services, his devotion, his life. This, one of the strongest feelings of antiquity, finds expression in the stirring address of Eteocles, patriot prince of Thebes, to his people. On the approach of the seven hostile chieftains, he, as called to guide the helm of the State, responsible for its weal, reminds the citizens of their duties (*Sev. ag. Thebes*, 10 *et seq.*).

"You it behoves, each one of you, both him who hath not reached the prime of youth and him who hath o'erpassed it, to steel your bodies' vigour, heedful each one of his own part, in order that ye may defend the city and the altars of our country's gods, that they may never be deprived of their rights, that for our children also ye may fight, and for our native land, our mother earth, beloved nurse. For she, receiving you as infants playing on her kindly bosom, hath taken on herself all toil of rearing, and nourished you to be for her spear-bearing habitors, faithful in this her time of need."

<sup>1</sup> *To deinon*—literally, dread of something to be feared. The reader will bear in mind the mark of the man whose aim it was "to be and not to seem"—he also was *deinos*, to be feared, because he feared the gods.

<sup>2</sup> *Symmetron*, a word that, itself uttered "with measure," springs from the mean.

This is the true Hellenic view of citizenship; for this one purpose is each of her sons bred up and nurtured, that he may be *faithful* to his country in her hour of trial. Needless to say, Æschylus at least was faithful to his trust. From the Grecian line of ships at Salamis, he tells us, there went up the mighty cry: "O sons of the Hellenes, on! set free the fatherland, free wife and child, the temples of our country's gods, our fathers' graves! Now for our all we fight." For Hellas is the struggle, the great *agōn*, the agony.

And in this agony the supreme part was played by Athens, the poet's mother-city.

"Doth Athens still survive?" inquires the Persian queen (347) of the messenger from the seat of war. His reply is significant (349):—

"Her *sons* surviving, she a sure bulwark hath!"



## § IX.—SOPHOCLES

WHEN we turn to the successor of Æschylus, the rugged warrior-bard, we find ourselves in the presence of a character of a different stamp and mould, one that has been nurtured under the most genial and sunny of skies.

Sophocles comes before us as one of those rare natures which it is impossible for fortune to spoil. The lines had indeed fallen to him in pleasant places. He possessed the gift which the Greeks held to be the very crown of life—a beautiful mind in a beautiful body. He had, moreover, no struggle with adverse circumstances, for his father was a man of substance, and was able to secure for his son, not only immunity from hardship, but every advantage in education and training which the culture of the day had to offer. Again, the period of his opening manhood coincided with that of the great intellectual summer of Hellas; later competition with a rival such as Æschylus brought every fibre of his nature into exercise; the friendship of men like Pericles, Anaxagoras, and Herodotus was at once a stimulus and a refreshment; and (although last, by no means least) the great development of the plastic arts—the presentation of the beautiful in visible form—which took place under the Periclean régime at Athens, must have acted as a powerful spur to that other presentation which appeals to mind and ear, and meets us in the harmony and flow of the Sophoclean verse no less than in the thoughts which it enshrines. In the hands of Sophocles first it is that the Greek language blossoms into the full flower of that which can only be adequately described in its own terminology as *charis*—grace, loveliness, delight. Twenty times did Sophocles bear away the first prize in the great annual tragic competition at Athens, and yet he remained unspoiled—true to the same high consciousness of his mission as a poet, of his call to be in truth a teacher of the people, which we have seen in Pindar and in Æschylus. Throughout the whole of his writings there breathes the deepest reverence for the Unseen Power, and at the same time a fellow-feeling with all the woes that flesh is called upon to bear—a real sympathy, which strikes us all the more, coming, as it does, from one himself so favoured by fortune.

“I know that I am a *man*,” says his noble Theseus (*Æd. Col.*, 560), and the words mean much. Read in two ways, they give the keynote to the life-philosophy of Sophocles:—

(1) I am a mortal; I myself have been in trouble, and I know not what the morrow may bring forth for me—hence it behoves me to be pitiful towards my fellow-mortals.

(2) I am a mortal—hence it behoves me also to look well to my relation to the Power that is not mortal.

In other words, the corollary to

“I am a man—I know it,” is

“There is a God—I know it.”

## THE IDEA OF GOD

To Sophocles, as to his great predecessor, the thought of God is summed up in Zeus as the father and ruler of men. True, like Æschylus,<sup>1</sup> he has his doubts as to whether under this name the God of gods should indeed be invoked. "O thou that rulest, living over all, Zeus!—if thus we rightly name thee," says the chorus in the grandest ode of *Œdipus the King* (*Œd. Tyr.*, 903). Rightly or wrongly, however, no other name is known, and so Sophocles, like Æschylus, continues to use it as symbol of the Highest and Mightiest, of the Invisible Justice, of the Father of gods and men. "Take courage, child! take courage!" says the chorus to the despairing Electra (*El.*, 173). "Still lives in heaven great Zeus, who sees and governs all." And in like manner the women of Trachis console Deianeira, and urge her to hope. "For," say they, "who ever saw Zeus without counsel for his children?" (*Tr.*, 139). Hence he is called upon as Alexetor, the defender; hence also, as in Homeric days (*Od.*, i. 43), he is supremely the god of the suppliant, of the distressed; and so Philoktetes, in his dread lest Neoptolemus should leave him behind on the lonely island where he has spent so many miserable years, exclaims in his agony (*Phil.*, 484): "Hear me, my son! By Zeus himself, the protector of the suppliant, I implore thee!"

As the ruler of men, Zeus is also the Invisible Justice, and therefore the chorus in the *Electra* asks (824): "Where is the thunder of Zeus, where the glaring eye of Helios,<sup>2</sup> if beholding such deeds (the murder of Agamemnon) they hide them with indifference?"

The punishment of evil-doers is a necessity, if God be God; and hence again, when the wretched Polyneikes in his banishment reminds Œdipus—the father whom he and Eteocles his brother had helped to drive from home and Thebes—that "beside Zeus on the throne is seated Aidos (mercy)," the outraged father retorts (*Œd. Col.*, 1267, 1380), "If Dikē (justice) of old fame sits counsellor with Zeus by primeval law," the curse which he has called down upon his sons shall take possession of *their* seat and throne.

As supreme, Zeus is the giver of victory, and boasting is hateful to him (*Ant.*, 143, 127). He is all-seeing (*Ant.*, 184) and all-knowing, and as such Horkos, the god of the oath, is said to be his (Zeus') Horkos (*Œd. Col.*, 1767). Necessarily he is the witness of the truth (*Tr.*, 400); hence, when the hapless Philoktetes asks, "Am I to be deceived a *second* time?" Neoptolemus replies, "I swear by the holy fear of the highest, even Zeus," and Philoktetes is reassured. "O dearest words!" he says (*Phil.*, 1288), "if thou mean them honestly."

Finally, Zeus is supreme, not only over men and human affairs, but over gods (*pantarchēs theōn*; *Œd. Col.*, 1085). When Heracles appears to Philoktetes—no longer as a man, but beautified, as a supernatural and Divine being—it is in order that he may (*Phil.*, 1413) "proclaim the decrees of Zeus." In like manner the Delphic oracle is declared to be really that of Zeus; Apollo is only his agent. It is the "sweet voice of Zeus" that resounds from the golden shrine of Pytho, says the chorus in *Œdipus the King* (151); and when Œdipus himself, knowing that his last hour is approaching, implores the protection of Theseus, he assures the Athenian king that such and such things

<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, p. 362.

<sup>2</sup> The sun, who sees all things. We have already shown, in connection with the great trilogy of Æschylus, how deep-rooted was this belief in the certainty of the Divine *opsis*, the Divine avenging.



must happen (*Ed. Col.*, 623), "if Zeus still is Zeus, and his Phoebus true"; and again, touching the oracles concerning himself, he says (*Ed. Col.*, 792), "I know of a surety, inasmuch as I heard it from Apollo, and from his father Zeus himself"—in other words, Apollo is held to be simply the mouthpiece of Zeus.

The foregoing will suffice to show how true Sophocles is to the highest teaching of his predecessors, or rather to the deepest instinct of the human spirit—that belief in ONE GOD, one supreme Disposer of events, which shines out so clearly through all the polytheism of Greece.

But Sophocles would not be the great teacher he is if he did but repeat the truths enumerated by his predecessors. No! he, as they had done, made a distinct step in advance. Just as Pindar discovered that communion between the Divine and the human spirit is a possible reality, that God can breathe "sweet order of peace" into the soul,<sup>1</sup> and just as Æschylus interpreted the doctrine of *pathos mathos*, "learning by suffering," as meaning that God Himself willeth to lead men to repentance,<sup>2</sup> so, in like manner, has Sophocles his own revelation of God to deliver to his age-fellows. Like that of Æschylus, it is a stern one—nothing less than this, that God is the Lawgiver of the universe, the Author of the great primeval laws, which, together with the consciousness of the Invisible Justice, have travelled down through the slow course of the ages. We have seen these laws in action in Homer, in Hesiod, in Pindar, in Æschylus<sup>3</sup>—in all, God is recognised as their watchful Guardian. It is left for Sophocles to divine, with truth, that God is their *Author*.

## THE WORLD-IDEAL OF SOPHOCLES

Like his great predecessor, Sophocles has an ideal that cannot be narrowed down to the actual experience of any one individual. Just as Æschylus sees the salvation of all ranks of created beings in the *restoration of the world-order*, in submission to the Invisible Justice, so, in like manner, does there hover before Sophocles as the ideal for human society reverence for the great unwritten laws, implanted by that same Justice in every human heart. This great ideal comes before us in each work of the master. Most clearly do we find it summed up in a grand passage in one of the choral odes in *Œdipus the King*:—

"Ah!" say the elders of Thebes (*Œd. Tyr.*, 863 *et seq.*), "were it the lot of my life to keep in sacred purity each word and work, true to the LAWS set forth on high! For they are born in heaven, Olympus alone is their sire; neither hath mortal nature conceived them, nor ever hath forgetfulness lulled them into slumber. No! for in them is a mighty God, and He waxeth not old."

Sophocles, like Æschylus, seems to have set himself the task of unravelling the meaning of the old stories concerning man and his "fate," that had travelled down through the ages, and he finds the solution of the problem, as Æschylus had found it, in the fact that the world-order had been wilfully disturbed, and must be restored before society could be saved.

In Æschylus we see, as it were, the Divine side of the problem: God Himself intervening—as Perfection, to make the imperfect perfect; as Justice, to restore the balance threatened by human pride and ambition.

In Sophocles we have, on the other hand, the human side. If Æschylus

<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, p. 341.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 365. <sup>3</sup> See pp. 266, 313, 353, 366.

shows how the restoration is to be accomplished—by intervention on the part of God—Sophocles shows how this must be met on the part of man—by adherence to the highest law of his being, even the great unwritten moral law.

## SIN

"Sin," therefore, to Sophocles as to St. Paul, is the "transgression of the law"—with, of course, the distinction that to the one the "law" was the written revealed will of God, to the other it was the unwritten decree graven on the human heart. To both the law was sacred.

"Thy power, O Zeus!" says the chorus in the *Antigone* (604)—"who amongst men can hinder by transgression (by *hyper-basia*, overstepping of the bounds) that power which neither sleep, the all-pursuer, hath ever overtaken, nor the unwearied moons? In ageless time thou rulest in the radiant splendour of Olympus. In the hereafter, as in the past, this law holds good. In mortal life nothing is wholly free from sin (*atē*)."  
Sin as *atē* is both sin and its consequences, its punishment, and in the age of Sophocles, as in Homeric days, men still clung to the comfortable notion that *atē* was a sort of fate which could not be resisted—a notion which found expression in the current ideas regarding "the doom" on a house, "the curse" on a family or race. Sophocles sets himself with all his might to resist this notion. He shows men in the plainest way that they are their own *atē*, that they bring their own curse, their own doom upon themselves—that what they are pleased to call "curse," "doom," even the "fulfilling of the oracles," is nothing else than the natural working out of obedience to the great laws. The moral law, the law of the soul, may no more be disregarded with impunity than may the physiological law, the law of the body. This is the first great lesson which Sophocles, as a teacher, has to tell his fellows. He sees no salvation out of the old paths; he traces all the unhappiness, all the misery of human life to this *hyper-basia*, the overstepping of the great laws. He repeats with double emphasis the saying put into the mouth of the father of gods and men by Homer (*Od.*, i. 32):—

"Lo! how vainly now do mortals blame the gods! For they say that from us cometh evil; whereas they themselves, of their own reckless folly, have woes beyond that which is ordained."

Why? Because "woe" springs from "folly"—from *atē*, or, as in the Homeric text, from *atasthalia* (presumptuous folly)—as certainly as does a plant from its seed.

In the laws is a mighty God, and he waxeth not old. Here we have the poetic equivalent for the saying preserved in the *Memorabilia* of Xenophon (iv. 4, 19): that the man who oversteps the unwritten laws incurs a penalty which he can in no way escape, since the sin carries its own punishment with it—a fact which proclaims the Divine origin of the law; for, to invent a law, the breach of which shall be self-punishing, passes the wit of man.

The first message of Sophocles to his age, then, is threefold, and may be summed up thus: He tells them

(a) That the Invisible Justice still lives and governs in and through the unwritten laws.

(b) That man is the maker of his own "fate"—by the observance or non-observance of these laws.

(c) That, by the action of those very same laws, the sins of the fathers descend to the children, as by a sort of natural entail.

Hard and stern as is this threefold message, however, Sophocles has a



gentler and sweeter one to place by its side. He, like Homer, knows that the Divine Power can be touched by penitence and contrition.

"Common it is to all men to sin,"<sup>1</sup> says the venerable Teiresias in the *Antigone* (1023), "but if sin hath been committed, that man is neither left without counsel (*a-boulos*) nor yet unblest who, when he hath fallen, maketh amends (*akētai* = seeketh healing), and remaineth not stubborn. Self-will alone to folly is imputed."<sup>2</sup>

In other words, it is the attitude of the *will* that makes the difference in the sin, in the degree of guilt. Only the obstinate, who refuse to yield to the clear voice of the great laws, are finally condemned. It is this stubborn self-will that is the sin of sins to the mind of Sophocles, as the *hybris* of arrogant presumption was to that of Pindar; and just as Pindar knew three grades of *hybris*, so does Sophocles know three different stages in the bent of the will :—

(a) The first stage is the right one, the stage of a good, well-advised will—*eu-boulia*, prudence; this Sophocles takes to be the strongest, mightiest of possessions. Why? Because a man of good will is master of himself and of his reason, able to understand and to follow good counsel.

(b) But we are on an inclined plane where will is concerned, and the first halting-place on the downward journey is *a-boulia*—that thoughtlessness which will not listen to counsel. This our master calls (*Ant.*, 1242) "the worst evil" than can befall a man.

(c) The final stage is that of the *dys-boulia*, the thoroughly perverse will, that follows its own counsel, simply because it is its own counsel, regardless of consequences.

The series is instructive :—

*Eu-boulia* = The well-advised state, willingness to see and do the right, even at the cost of the humbling of the self.

*A-boulia* = The ill-advised state, when the self bids one be immovable.

*Dys-boulia* = The condition in which a man will not listen to counsel—a will with all the force of the *dys* prefixed, dismal and perverse.

The whole series is illustrated in the character of Kreon. He comes before us in *Œdipus the King* as, to all appearance, *eu-boulos*, right-minded and well advised. In the *Œdipus at Colonus* he is *a-boulos*, arrogant, harsh, altogether hateful in his conduct towards Œdipus. Finally, in the *Antigone* his self-will reaches a climax, and ends in his own ruin and that of his house. Kreon himself speaks of his obstinacies as his *dys-boulie*, the series of wrong-headed, wrong-minded, wrong-willed acts which, originating in his own wrong counsels, have brought down upon him the judgment of the gods.

For men of good-will, however, men ready to "seek healing" and make amends, there is hope—a hope summed up in the beautiful words which Sophocles puts into the mouth of his Œdipus, when the king has at length reached the goal of his wanderings, and his sufferings are about to end. Too feeble and helpless, in his blindness, himself to undertake the necessary propitiatory rites, Œdipus deposes them to another, with the significant words (*Œd. Col.*, 498) :—

"One soul can make conciliation for ten thousand—if it approach with pure intent (*eunous*)."<sup>3</sup>

A prophetic glance into the generosity of the Divine nature, which may be

<sup>1</sup> *Exhamartanein* = to fail, miss the mark.

<sup>2</sup> The curious way in which the Greeks attributed sin to intellectual blindness is well exemplified in the above passage. The "folly" to which self-will is imputed is *stupidity*.

<sup>3</sup> "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God; Thy law is within my heart."

placed by the side of the "burden-bearer" of Æschylus—that Saviour who should one day come to take upon Himself the burden of humanity, as personified in the suffering Prometheus.

## THE GREAT UNWRITTEN LAWS

**Reverence towards the Unseen Power.**—This, the first of the unwritten laws, is with Sophocles also the last, the most lasting. "Reverence (*eusebeia*)," he says (*Phil.*, 1440), "dieth not with mortals; whether they live or die, it perisheth not"—i.e. reverence, being in its very nature concerned with the immortal, cannot die.

The views of Sophocles on the right attitude of man towards his God are best summed up, perhaps, in the *Ajax*, one of the finest but least known of the tragedies which have come down to us. Let us, therefore, briefly glance at its teaching.

We must repeat here what we have often had occasion to point out before, namely, that the Greek poets allowed themselves great latitude in their delineation of the national heroes. Especially is this the case as regards two of the most prominent, Ajax and Odysseus (Ulysses). In Homer's *Iliad*, Ajax stands out as a noble, God-fearing man, a very bulwark of the Achaians. The *Iliad*, however, only takes us down to the death of Patroclus and revenge of Achilles. What happened after these events is narrated by the poets of the epic cycle, who told, amongst other things, of an attack of madness which had befallen Ajax, and during which the hero had first committed the insensate freak of slaughtering the flocks and herds won as booty and held as common property (or as yet undivided) by the Greek army, and thereafter had put an end to his own life. The cause of the madness was said to be jealousy, disappointment and anger working in the heart of Ajax, because the golden armour of Achilles had been withheld from him, and awarded by the Greek leaders, as the meed of honour due to the worthiest, to Odysseus, and not to himself.<sup>1</sup>

Sophocles, however, does not seem to have been satisfied with this explanation. Disappointment about the arms of Achilles might indeed have been a cause of the madness, but then there must have been a cause again behind that cause. Madness, amongst the Greeks, was regarded as a "Divine" malady, a visitation directly from the gods, and so the chorus in the *Ajax* expressly asserts (180): "The malady is heaven-sent (*theia*)"—Divine in its origin. And thus the question naturally arose: Why should madness have come upon Ajax, of all men? Why should the noble "bulwark of the Achaians" have been so fearfully visited?

The answer to the question Sophocles embodies in his tragedy.

In the opening scene Odysseus appears, watching anxiously by night near the tent of Ajax. Rumours of the hero's doings have reached him, and, with his usual caution, he has come to reconnoitre, and, if possible, ward off further mischief. He is met by Athena—here, as in Homer, the constant protectress of the man of many devices. She explains that she herself has already warded off real and imminent danger. Ajax—goaded on by the thought that the golden armour of Achilles would have come to him, and to none other, had the decision been made by the hero himself during his lifetime—had gone

<sup>1</sup> We recollect that this version of the story was accepted by Pindar (see p. 342), who conceives that Ajax had lost the prize through his modesty and inability to sound his own praises, whilst Odysseus had secured it by his adroitness of speech and powers of persuasion and flattery.



forth that night with the full intention of avenging himself upon those who have deprived him of what he imagines to have been his rightful honour. Had not Athena blinded him, so that in his delusion he mistook animals for men, and wreaked his vengeance on innocent cattle, the leaders of the host (Agamemnon and his brother Menelaus, and, above all, Odysseus, the prime object of his hatred) must have perished.

All this Athena relates to Odysseus, and, to verify her words, calls forth from his tent the perpetrator of the deed. Ajax answers to her call, and appears, still labouring under the delusion. In his hand is a scourge dripping with blood, which he believes to be the blood of men, and he assures the goddess with fiendish glee that never again shall the two sons of Atreus (Agamemnon and Menelaus) insult or put a slight on Ajax, for dead are both. But as for Odysseus—that wily, well-practised fox—for him he has reserved another fate: Odysseus has been brought to his tent in triumph, a prisoner, and he shall die another death, his back all crimson with the scourge.

Athena then dismisses him, and Ajax returns to his tent and the horrible business of scourging to death the luckless ram which, in his madness, he takes to be Odysseus, his rival and supplanter.

The latter now shows himself the real Homeric leader, the man of true greatness of soul. No word of scorn, no exclamation of anger even, escapes his lips—he has nothing but compassion, deep and sincere, for the hero, once so noble, now fallen so low.

“Seest thou, Odysseus,” says the goddess (*Aj.*, 118 *et seq.*), “the power of the gods? Who ever showed more forethought than did this man? Or who was ever found more prompt to act—to do the right deed at the fitting time?”

“I know of none,” Odysseus rejoins. “In this his misery I pity him although he hates me, seeing him thus yoke-fellow to an evil fate (an evil *atē*). And in him I do behold myself. For this I see, that we who live are nothing more than shadows, empty shadows.”

“These things considering,” says Athena, “take heed that thou thyself address unto the gods no overweening, boastful word, nor bear thyself with arrogance, if others thou excell’st in strength of arm or power of wealth; for one day maketh and unmaketh every child of man—sinketh and raiseth him again. The wise of heart<sup>1</sup> the gods do love, but the wicked are an abomination unto them.”

With these words the goddess vanishes. The key to her warning is found later on, when Calchas, the seer, reveals to Teucros, the half-brother of Ajax, the cause of the anger of the heavenly powers. The madness is an *atē*, a “self-chosen woe,” inasmuch as it flows from a deliberate sin or sinful habit of mind.

This showed itself, says the seer (*Aj.*, 758 *et seq.*), in Ajax even as a youth, in the senseless rejoinder made by him to the wise advice given him by his father on leaving for the war. “My son,” the old man had said, “*will* to be victor with the spear, but victor *always with God!*” “Father,” replies the haughty youth, “even a nothing can be victor with the gods. *I* trust to win this glory without *them*”—literally, apart from them, *dicha*, sundered from God. Such was his boastful speech. Nor was this all; for later, when the decree had gone forth that the hand of blood should be turned against the foe, and Athena sought to cheer and encourage him for the contest, Ajax rejects her assistance with the bold, unheard-of words: “My lady queen, be near, give help to *others* in the Argive ranks. Where *we* stand, there never shall the storm of war break through.”

<sup>1</sup> *Sophronas*—literally, the sound, healthy of heart, right-thinking men.

Is this spirit of Ajax altogether dead? Is there no echo of it in our own day? "With a God, even a nothing might succeed. I will evolve myself out of myself, by my own unaided strength will I get to myself the victory. Let God—if there be a God—give His help to His weaklings. Religion is all very well for women and children. What need of it has a man?"

"Who ever showed more forethought than did *this* man? Who ever was found more prompt to act, to do the right deed at the right time, than Ajax, bulwark of the Greeks? And now—alas! hear the hero himself:—

"'Who ever would have thought that my misfortunes could tally with *my* name! *Ai! ai!* well may I cry, not twice, but thrice—*ai! ai!*'" (*Aj.*, 430).<sup>1</sup>

The comment of the Hellene is that of the Hebrew prophet: "O Ephraim—O Isaac—thou hast destroyed thyself!" The awakening from the delusion, brought on by his own fevered mind and jealous broodings, is more than Ajax's pride can brook—the contempt and scorn of all around he cannot meet. "Nobly to live or nobly to die befits the nobly born." The first has failed him; "nobly to live," apart from God—this is not possible; the last alternative, according to the ethics of his age, is open to him still—and Ajax falls upon his sword, the fatal gift of Hector.

The explanation of the "fate" of the hero is, then, in the eyes of the old master (*Aj.*, 760), that Ajax has transgressed the first of the unwritten laws; he, "being born in the nature of a man, thought himself higher than a man," wherefore the heavenly power o'erthrew him, but not, let us note, by extraneous means. The breach of the unwritten laws, as we read in the *Memorabilia*, carries with it its own punishment. The same *hybris*, pride of heart, which leads Ajax to reject the help of God leads him to set that undue value on himself and his services which, brooded over, brings on the fatal catastrophe. "In the great unwritten laws is a mighty God, even the Invisible Justice, and He groweth not old."

The sacredness of the marriage bond is vindicated in the drama which we now go on to consider, the *Trachinean Women*. In it, Heracles (Hercules) and his consort Deianeira are the leading figures, and the interest centres around the untimely and horrible death which the great national hero is "fated" to die. For the whole "history" of Heracles, his wondrous deeds and his sufferings, we must refer the reader to our companion volume, where it is told in full. Suffice it here to trace the story so far only as will enable us to understand the action of the drama.

During the time in which Heracles was in the service of Eurystheus, king of Mycenæ, he had married Deianeira, daughter of Ceneus, the wine-man, king of Pleuron in Ætolia, and lived for a time happily with her in the house of his father-in-law. At length, in consequence of blood-guilt, an unpremeditated manslaughter on the part of hot-tempered Heracles, the hero and his bride are forced to quit the bounds of Ætolia. They wander forth, and take up their abode in Tiryns in Argolis. On the way thither, however, an incident with unforeseen and far-reaching results befalls them. The fugitives have to cross the river Evenus in Ætolia; there is neither boat nor bridge, and Deianeira must be carried to the opposite shore by the centaur Nessus, who acts as bearer. During the passage, the alarm of the young wife is excited by the behaviour of the centaur, a creature half-horse, half-man, and she cries for help, whereupon Heracles with his infallible arrows shoots Nessus, and wounds him mortally. The dying centaur gives to Deianeira, as a legacy, a handful of his black blood, which he describes as a love-charm, directing her how to use

<sup>1</sup> In allusion to the signification of the name *Aias*, akin to *aiazo*, to wail and lament. *Ai!* / *ai!* = alas! alas!



it should she ever lose the affections of her husband. This supposed charm Deianeira, nothing suspecting, accepts, and puts away in a secret place.

The young couple dwell in Tiryns for many years, during which Heracles pursues his adventurous career, and Deianeira remains at home, a true wife, faithful to all the interests of the husband so often perforce absent; and occupied in the rearing of their children, of whom the eldest-born, Hyllus, at the point where Sophocles takes up the thread of the narrative, has already arrived at man's estate.

Meantime, in his wanderings, Heracles has had the misfortune to see and conceive a violent passion for Iolē, the lovely daughter of Eurytus, king of Oichalia, on the island of Eubœa. He demands the maiden of her father, a request which is promptly and properly refused.<sup>1</sup> Heracles conceals his disappointment, but gratifies his revengeful feelings in a deed wholly at variance with his (hitherto) open and straightforward character. He invites Iphitus, the brother of Iolē, to his house in Tiryns, as guest-friend, and then murders the youth by throwing him over the walls of the city. For this "blood-guilt" Heracles and his family are obliged again to leave their home. Deianeira and her children take refuge at Trachis, where the king receives them hospitably; but as for Heracles, he is still further punished by being deprived of his liberty. "A lie is a foul blot on the name of the free man," says Deianeira in the same drama (*Tr.*, 450), and Heracles has acted the worst of lies. The popular opinion is further expressed by Lichas the herald (*Tr.*, 274), viz. that Heracles would have been forgiven had he taken an open revenge: but "Olympian Zeus, the king and father of all, was wroth with him because he had killed the man by guile," and so the slave of secret and unlawful passion is openly sold as a slave, by command of Zeus, to a woman, Omphale, queen of Lydia. Mark the irony of the old, old legend; even in its original form it lends itself to the purpose of the poet.

But Heracles, with all his faults, is still the son of Zeus, and the object of the chastisement is the *pathos mathos*. He goes indeed into captivity for a time; but he takes with him a Divine assurance, received amid the sacred oaks of the ancient oracle of Dōdōna, that if he is victor in this conflict a length of happy days shall be his. Nor is he left in doubt as to what conflict is meant, for its time is definitely given—when three moons and one year shall have passed away, from the commencement of his Lydian servitude (*Tr.*, 74 *et seq.*, 165 *et seq.*).

That time has now arrived, and with it the drama begins. In the opening scene we see Deianeira at Trachis, conversing with a faithful slave. She laments her own hard fate, thus to be left desolate, without the consolation of knowing even where her lord has sojourned during the weary months of his absence. Of one thing alone Deianeira is certain, and this is, that the present is a time most momentous for Heracles. Now is the crisis and turning-point of his life. Before he went away on this last expedition—bound she knew not whither—he left with her a tablet whereon was an inscription whose words betokened an impending conflict at this very hour. The slave advises her to send forth one of her sons in quest of his father, and Hyllus, the eldest, approaching at the moment, Deianeira takes counsel with him.

Hyllus rejoins that he already knows something of his father's doings—he knows of the Lydian servitude to a woman, and furthermore that Heracles is at that moment, so they say, engaged in attacking the city of Eurytus on the island of Eubœa (only a short distance from Trachis).

<sup>1</sup> Monogamy is the rule among the Hellenes as far back in their annals as we can go.

His mother then reveals to him the nature of the oracle in her possession, the "faithful prophecy concerning this very hour"<sup>1</sup>—viz. that Heracles shall either now end his days, or, if he prove victor in this conflict (this *athlon*), pass the remainder of his life in bliss.

Construing the conflict to be the siege of Oichalia, and alarmed by the thought that his father may even then be in danger, Hyllus departs at once to his assistance, and Deianeira is left to her forebodings of coming woe, forebodings which in a brief space take but too tangible a shape—for Lichas, the herald of Heracles, arrives, bringing with him a band of women captives, and the intelligence that Heracles himself will shortly appear in person.

Deianeira receives the new-comers with kindness, compassionating the sad fate of those who, now homeless and fatherless, possibly were free-born as herself. To one maiden especially she feels attracted; the blow seems to have fallen with terrible effect on her, and Deianeira inquires with pity concerning her name and lineage. The girl, absorbed in her grief, can give no answer; and Lichas the herald professes to know no more than that she and the others are prisoners of war, "captives of the spear," taken at the sack of Oichalia, the city of Eurytus, which, he says, Heracles has destroyed in order to avenge himself for the ignominious servitude in Lydia—a punishment inflicted upon him, as we know, because of his treachery to the son of Eurytus, the Oichalian king. The maiden is then led into the house, but Deianeira is not long left in doubt as to the real object of her presence there. She is none other than the hapless Iolē, sent home, not as the captive, but the "bride" of Heracles—the rival who has taken from the true and faithful wife the affection of her lord.

All this Deianeira learns from a peasant, who is in possession of the facts of the case, and convicts the herald of falsehood in the version of the story of the sack of Oichalia which he has just told to Deianeira. Adjured by the latter to speak the whole truth—for falsehood is a blot upon the name of the free man—Lichas now confesses that his master has destroyed the city and put the father and brothers of Iolē to the sword, not out of revenge for the disgrace of the Lydian punishment, but in order to obtain possession of the maiden, whom her father would not give to him in secret wedlock. "This man," concludes the herald (*Tr.*, 488), "once first and victor over all, is now, by reason of this love, of *all the weakest*."

In other words, Heracles has *not* been "victor in this conflict"—the *athlon* set before him. His secret passion has been victor, but in sending home this, his "bride," he has, says the chorus later in the drama (*Tr.*, 893), sent to his home "an Erinyes," an avenging curse.

It must be acknowledged that the so-called son of Zeus presents but a sorry picture at this stage of his career. We see him standing on the heights of Eubœa, before the altar of his father, offering with unblushing effrontery, as priest and patriarch, the spoils of the unholy war in which he has been engaged—the proceeds of his lust; while, but a short distance off, on the mainland, are the two women whose lives he has ruined—his own tried and faithful wife, and the girl-victim just budding out into womanhood, dumb with the terror of the scenes through which she has passed.

But the Invisible Justice has witnessed the overstepping of the unwritten law of the home—in it, as in all sacred ties, there lives a mighty God, and He slumbers not.

According to the old legend, which Sophocles follows, the distracted Deianeira bethinks her at this juncture of the charm given her by the centaur

<sup>1</sup> Or "this very land" (*i.e.* the land of Eubœa), reading *choras* instead of *horas*.



Nessus; and, acting with not one thought of malice or revenge, but in the simple belief that she will thereby win back her husband's love, she spreads the black blood upon a sacrificial robe which she has made for Heracles, and sends it to him, enclosed in a casket, with the request that he will wear it when he stands before the altar of Zeus.

In the Sophoclean version of the legend there is a very significant touch—the robe is prepared in the dark and conveyed in the dark, shut up in a casket; before it is put on publicly, *it must not see the sunlight*. The robe borne within the casket thus becomes the very symbol and emblem of the dark and secret purpose which Heracles has borne about with him for many months within his heart. He now puts it on openly, as he has carried out his dark purpose openly, and it brings to the wearer, as his purpose has brought to others, death and destruction.

No sooner has Heracles put on the robe and thus brought it out into daylight—no sooner have his thoughts developed into acts—than the garment immediately cleaves to his limbs as though welded to them; like the virus of an adder, the poison spread upon the garment penetrates into every fibre of his being, eating into flesh and bone like a consuming fire.

"My fresh life-blood it hath drunk up," says Heracles at the last in agony insufferable; "my whole body it hath destroyed, o'ermastered by this invisible chain." The robe thrown around his shoulders by Deianeira, he says (*Tr.*, 1050), "was woven by the Erinyes"—*i.e.* by the guardians of the sacred ties of blood.

What need of comment on this Nessus-robe—this garment steeped in the blood of a creature half animal, half man, in whom the sensual has overpowered the spiritual? Is it not amongst us still, the "secret chain" of hidden lust, invisible until its poison has begun to work—dragging down many a strong "son of Zeus," many an one made in the image of his God—ruining and sapping the foundations of the home?

The sequel of the drama is told in a few words. Deianeira, on learning the result of her innocent experiment—"she failed," says the poet, "desiring only the best"<sup>1</sup>—in the agony of her remorse puts an end to her own life. Heracles is carried to the heights of Mount Ceta, placed on a funeral pyre, and released from his torture.

Yet the fearful suffering which he has endured at the hands of the Invisible Justice has cleansed him from his sin, and Heracles is accepted.

In the *Philoktetes*, another drama of our poet, he appears purified and glorified, as the true son of Zeus, and says to the suffering hero: "And first I point thee to the changes and chances of mine own mortal life—the toils and troubles which I went through before I reached this everlasting virtue, this state of bliss, wherein thou dost behold me."

In Heracles also, the *pathos mathos*, learning by suffering, has done its work; the Nessus-robe is finally thrown off—by him only in eternity; by many an one even now, in the time of his mortal life, "hating even the garments spotted by the flesh."<sup>2</sup>

Throughout the drama there runs again and again the refrain: "This is the work of Zeus"; "In the unwritten laws is a mighty God, and He groweth not old."

The keeping of the oath and covenant is beautifully worked out in the *Philoktetes*. Sophocles here gives, as it were, a "modernised" version of the unwritten law in its bearing upon truth, as between man and man. (See the section headed *Ideals of Sophocles*.)

<sup>1</sup> Reading *mōmēnē* instead of *mōmēnē*.

<sup>2</sup> St. Jude 23.

The law concerning blood-guilt—that law which, as we have seen, has grown clearer and clearer as the centuries roll by—is dealt with in the *Electra*. We may say at once that this is the weakest of the master's works, for in it he sins against his own ideals. Sophocles, in fact, seems to have felt it impossible to surpass his great rival in dealing with the subject of the murder of Agamemnon and its punishment. As a Greek and an Athenian, he was bound to try his hand upon it, but the drama, relieved here and there by some splendid lines, is on the whole a failure.

In the first place (*El.*, 32), it bases the attempt of Orestes upon a lie; Phœbus Apollo bids the youth avenge his father by deceit (*doloisin*)—strange teaching for a god whom Pindar and Æschylus revere for hating a lie.

And in the second place, *Electra*, who gives her name to the drama, the daughter of the murdered Agamemnon and of Clytemnestra, is not a heroine that can enlist our sympathy. In her continual brooding over the thought of compassing not only the just avenging of her father's death, but the personal revenging of the hardships which she herself has had to endure, her whole nature has deteriorated. She has but one thought—Revenge! revenge!

Sophocles, it is true, takes care to justify his view of the girl's character—it is the result of the circumstances amid which she has grown up. As *Electra* says, "with such surroundings," forced to see what she must daily see, neither right-mindedness nor reserve is possible. The vile drags us down of necessity to do the vile. And again, when she says (*El.*, 307): "The base deed itself has taught us baseness," she is simply enunciating a stern truth. Although the whole conception may be perfectly true to nature, it is also perfectly horrible, inasmuch as it is not redeemed by any softer touch. How can we feel ourselves in touch with a daughter who, when she hears her mother's death cry (*El.*, 1415): "Woe's me! I am wounded!" exclaims: "Strike yet again, if thou hast strength!"

The character of *Electra* may be the outcome of the life she has led, and as such the delineation may be true; but it is nevertheless revolting.

Again, in the version of the story as told by Æschylus, the horror of the awful act of justice which Orestes is called upon to perform produces madness in him—a conception as grand as it is true and eternally fitting. But the Orestes of Sophocles is a light-headed youth, who promises his sister that, after success has crowned the attempt, "then they will rejoice and laugh!" Possibly the difference of the moods in which the two poets respectively approached the subject is nowhere better realised than in this one feature—the Orestes of Æschylus goaded to madness by the thought of what he has done, the Orestes of Sophocles rejoicing and laughing over his success!

We are bound to note the weak as well as the strong points of our master; but we willingly leave the *Electra* and pass on to another subject in which Sophocles stands supreme.

## THE TRILOGY

The action of the great laws, as understood by Sophocles—"in them is a mighty God, and He groweth not old"—is clear, as we have seen, in each of the works which have come down to us under his name. Most clearly, however, is it shown in that grandest of tragedies, the great series of dramas known as *Œdipus the King*, *Œdipus at Colonus*, and *Antigone*. The laws illustrated in the story of *Œdipus* and his race are those relating to the sacredness of the



family ties, the stain of blood-guilt, the protection of the suppliant, the pious care of the dead, and, lastly, to that which binds all the rest together, that from which the other laws take their strength, reverence for the great silent unseen power, the Invisible Justice that rules the universe.

In his demonstration in the trilogy of the proof that God is no despot, man no slave to fate, Sophocles stands as a great moral teacher abreast of Æschylus, nay, by the side of our own Shakespeare. Indeed, it were hardly too much to say that, as the forerunner, Sophocles, in the tragedies under consideration, is greater than Shakespeare. We may truly ask, Had there been no *King Œdipus*, would there have been a *King Lear*? Possibly "yes," inasmuch as both poets worked upon material ready to their hand; but the task of Sophocles was indisputably the harder. All that he had to build upon was a crude and mysterious myth to which a later saga had been tacked on, as it were. This myth or legend, which had been handed down, probably, from the days when the Aryan family dwelt together in the old home, is in itself the most ordinary, and yet in its results the most extraordinary, of the many sun-myths. In it we have depicted the most natural of phenomena—the Sun, born of his mother, the Dawn, running his course across the heaven, slaying on his return his father, the Night, wedding his own mother (whom, as the Twilight, he does not recognise), and bringing forth with her their mutual offspring, the clear, full Light of Day. Imagine now these varied factors—Dawn, Sun, Night and Day, personified, turned into actual human beings, represented as doing very much the same acts in their human capacity—and you have the groundwork of the most awful complication of which it is possible to conceive, a complication heightened by that other factor, the necessary outcome of a natural religion, that all this happened by the decree of God. The Oracle had said that Œdipus (the Greek representative of the sun-hero) should "slay his own father and wed his own mother," and the Oracle had spoken truly, for the Sun has gone on slaying Night and its horrors, Sphinx and Python, and wedding the Dawn, ever since.

But the meaning of the original legend, with its attendant interwoven saga, known to those who invented both, has long since faded from the minds of men, and the age of Sophocles, with its generation of thinking and sceptical inquirers, is face to face with a problem harder far to solve than any material problems set by the devouring Sphinx:—

Why did the gods, if they are just, allow a good and beneficent man, such as depicted in the Œdipus of the legend, to fall into so horrible a sin, to meet with so terrible a fate?

*Popular answer:* There must have been a "doom on the house," a "curse on the race."

*Second problem:* But why should the punishment fall upon an innocent man?

*No answer.*

*Popular deduction:* It is of no use to strive against fate. It is all one what a man does, whether his character is good, bad, or indifferent—the gods care not. Gods? There is no god but Fate!

Did the answer, with the inference therefrom, satisfy Sophocles? We trow not. Granted that there was a "doom" on a race, to any thinking mind there must have been a reason for it, since there is no effect without a cause. Granted that the punishment fell upon an apparently innocent man, a thinker who feels convinced of the eternal justice was constrained to ask: Had that man no share in bringing about what befell him? That is the question which Sophocles set himself to solve, and his answer is contained in the trilogy.

## ŒDIPUS THE KING

The story of Œdipus belongs to the Theban saga-cycle, in which his race, that of the Labdakidæ, occupies the central position filled by the Atreidæ in the sagas of Argos. Labdacus, grandson of Kadmos—the Man of the East, the legendary founder of Thebes—has a son named Laius, who commits a terrible sin against a beautiful youth, Chrysippus, the son of Pelops. Chrysippus in despair kills himself, and the father, thus bereft of his child, utters a curse<sup>1</sup> upon Laius, which the Delphic Oracle confirms later by warning the Theban king that, if he seeks to perpetuate his race, he will himself be slain by his own son, who will then wed his mother and plunge his whole house into misery and bloodshed. Thus the *penalty*, not the “fate,” of Laius is that, since by his crime he has deprived another of his child, he himself shall perish at the hands of his own child.

Laius for a while is content to abide by the warning of the Oracle, which answers truly enough to the instinct implanted within his own heart; but after a while a child is born to him, and, to outwit the Oracle, he plans with Jocaste, his wife, that it shall die. The infant, therefore (according to a custom not unknown among the Greeks), is exposed, while yet alive, on the wild heights of Cithæron; and, as if this cruelty were not enough, another is added, for its little feet are bored through and so fastened together. By sanctioning (or instigating) all this, Jocaste has brought herself within the action of the curse. She has now her share also in the further breach of the three great laws already broken by her husband:—

(1) Irreverence towards the Divine power, and the Divine voice within the heart.

(2) Breach of the family ties. Œdipus says long after of his sons (*Œd. Col.*, 403): “Their own hearts without the Oracle might teach them their duty to him.” So, conversely, Jocaste’s own heart condemns her, no less than the Oracle.

(3) Blood-guilt.

The sin of Laius, then, followed by a father’s curse—a curse which in antiquity was believed to have a Divine power, inasmuch as it was watched over and followed up by the Erinyes, the guardians of the family ties—this is the seed whence springs the whole crop of further sin and sorrow, a veritable Atë’s field, rich in death.

When the story opens in the tragedy of *Œdipus*, it is upon a scene of woe. Groups of sufferers of all ages, from the child to the grey-haired man, all bearing the wool-entwined bough of the suppliant, are kneeling around the altars and temples of the gods in the market-place of Thebes; in their midst stands, with his colleagues, the venerable priest of Zeus, highest god. Suddenly the doors of the palace are thrown open and Œdipus the king appears, attended by his retinue. He has come himself to inquire into the cause of the sorrowful concourse, of the suppliants’ boughs, the incense, the moans and laments wherewith the air is filled. Of all this, he says, he would himself take note, he would not hear it from another’s lips. No! he whom they called Œdipus the famed would willingly in all things be helpful to them; hard of heart indeed must he be, did he not compassionate the lowly seat of the suppliant (*Œd. Tyr.*, 1–14).

<sup>1</sup> This curse of Pelops was regarded in antiquity as the *motif* of the story of Laius, but the incidents are given differently by different chroniclers. The above version was known to Euripides; hence, doubtless, also to Sophocles.



The priest of Zeus, representing the people, makes answer: The city is in sore distress, no longer can she raise her head above the destroying wave—a mysterious plague is in the midst of her, and death is on all sides, in the home and in the fields.

But as to the reason of the present assembly, the priest adds, with a touch truly Hellenic: "*Not as holding thee equal to the gods, O Œdipus, do we—I and these children—as suppliants approach thy hearth, but as judging thee the best of men, best in devising counsel in life's misfortunes and in the judgments of the gods.*" Was it not Œdipus who had set them free from the yoke of the cruel songstress (the Sphinx), to whom, in time past, they had brought perforce their living tribute? And had he not done this single-handed, without the teaching of man—nay, solely by the help of God? To whom, then, but to Œdipus could they look in this perplexity? "Up then, best of mortals!" concludes the priest, "if thou wouldst still be ruler here, for naught is fort or ship, bereft of men."

To understand the high priest's allusions, we must premise that once before Œdipus had indeed, according to the saga, delivered the city by his ready wit. Long years ago, Thebes had been oppressed by a monster, the Sphinx, who ensconced herself hard by upon a hill, whence she propounded riddles to the citizens. Whosoever amongst them failed to answer these riddles aright met the cruel fate of death. So dire was the pest that Laius, king of Thebes, himself set out to inquire of the Oracle at Delphi as to the means of ridding the country of her. From this journey he never returned. He and his little band of followers were attacked in a lonely glen of Parnassus, the Triple Way, and all perished save one, who alone escaped to tell the tale.

At this crisis Œdipus, a homeless, unknown wanderer, but one who called himself prince and son of Corinth's king, arrives upon the scene. The riddle propounded by the Sphinx has no difficulties for him; straightway he solves it, whereat the creature in despair throws herself headlong from her hill, and perishes in the waters at its foot.<sup>1</sup> The citizens hail their deliverer with joy, give him Jocaste, wife of the former king, in marriage, and make him ruler over Thebes.

"Up then, best of mortals! save us again!" they cry, and Œdipus is not slow in responding to the appeal.

He tells them that, although he is only now thus publicly taking cognisance of the universal distress, it has long weighed upon his mind. Not one of those before him has felt it so deeply as himself; the trouble of all has

<sup>1</sup> The "Sphinx," as we have already shown (for a full explanation of the Sphinx-fable on Greek soil see *ante*, p. 53), is probably to be taken as an emblem of the mountain-torrents of Greece and the periodical flooding to which, through their agency, the low-lying plains are subjected. The "riddle" propounded to the inhabitants of the district in which she has taken up her abode is how to dispose of the superfluous waters, which, by their sudden rise, take their "toll" of men. The "guessing of the riddle" is the solving of the problem—the engineering skill that collects the waters into the one deep part, the "lake" at the foot of the hill, into which the Sphinx (the mountain-stream) plunges, and then is lost to sight. The guesser of the riddle is Œdipus, the man of deep counsel and ready wit, who devises the ways and means whereby the water-plague is got rid of, and who, in process of time, becomes identified with the Sun-god, who helps him by drying up the stagnant marshes. This sun-and-water legend is more suited in all its details to the immediate district of the Copaic Lake, where it doubtless grew up; but it was localised at Thebes, that ambitious city which, from the beginning, seems to have aimed at centralising all things within herself—poetry as well as politics. In the basis-story of Œdipus, then, we have an example of the marvellous way in which myth and saga were harmonised by the early poets. It was fitting that the beneficent Sun-god, drying up by superhuman power swamp and pestilential vapours, should be identified with, or transformed into, the energetic hero, able to grapple with the same difficulty on the human side, and to conquer it.

come upon him, on him alone, and on none other; the grief of the city is his. They have not come to awake him out of *sleep*. No! for already he has thought with tears over many plans. One only promises healing for the people, and this he has already followed out, for he has sent his own near relative, Kreon, his consort's brother, to Delphi, to ask counsel of Apollo.

Hardly has Œdipus ended his reply than the return of the ambassador from Delphi is announced. Kreon appears as the bearer of good tidings, crowned with a laurel garland rich in berries. He tells them that the cause, at least, of the mysterious plague has been disclosed; judgment has fallen upon Thebes because of the blood-guilt that rests upon her, in that the murder of her former ruler, Laius, still remains unpunished. Phœbus demands that the pest, the *miasma*, thus nourished in the land shall be dismissed beyond her borders or blood avenged by blood.

Œdipus inquires into the circumstances attending the death of Laius. Why, he asks, had not the crime been inquired into at the time of its occurrence? The terror of the Sphinx,<sup>1</sup> Kreon replies, had so absorbed the minds of men as to prevent their giving heed to aught besides. Œdipus then vows to search into the matter from its very inception, and thus give satisfaction at once to the land and to the god. He bids the suppliants arise and withdraw; the time for action has come, he will do all that can be done, and to this end proclaims a general assembly of the citizens.

The foregoing will suffice to show the groundwork of Sophocles' conception of the character of Œdipus. We have here the ideal ruler, the man not only of light but of leading, able and willing to employ his rare gifts in the service of others, feeling their distress as his own. The keynote of this side of Œdipus' nature is struck in the beautiful words which he utters a little later in the drama (*Œd. Tyr.*, 314).

"To help<sup>2</sup> is, for a man, so far as means and strength are his, the noblest task."

And that this is no mere empty sentiment is proved by the words of the high priest: "We come to thee as best of men." Moreover, Œdipus is not only generous, but pious. He has thought over many plans, he says, but recognises that the only real way to solve this problem is by asking counsel of the wisest.

How, then, comes it that such a man is "overtaken by fate," by trouble, by calamity? The next scenes will furnish perhaps a clue to the mystery.

When the people have assembled in the market-place Œdipus addresses them as one to whom judgment and power have been given as a sacred trust. He himself, he says, is a stranger amongst them; of the deed he knows nothing, nor can he discover the doer of it without a trace or clue. Hence it is to them, the people of Kadmos, the born children of the land, that he, who but of late was domiciled amongst them, must look. Does any man know aught concerning it? Let him not fear to speak, even although he himself thus bear witness against himself. Unharméd he shall be suffered to depart the land. But the man who knows the perpetrator of this deed and hides his knowledge, on him Œdipus pronounces a fearful sentence. He shall be put under the ban of the State and of society; no one shall receive him or greet him; he shall be cut off from the common worship of the gods, from prayer and sacrifice and purification; thrust out shall he be from every house as the *miasma*, the pest, who has defiled them all. He, Œdipus, offers himself as ally to the god and to the murdered man, and curses the wretch who did the deed;

<sup>1</sup> *i.e.* the flooding of the land.

<sup>2</sup> Literally, to be of use—*ophelein*.



a miserable existence shall be his. Yea, continues Œdipus, if *under his own roof*, by his own hearth, the murderer be found, may the curse which he now pronounces upon others be fulfilled upon himself. *He* now enjoys the place once filled by the man who was slain; if fate had not been against him, Laius' children would have grown up with his own; therefore, says Œdipus, he himself will fight for Laius *as for a father*, and track out with zeal unwearied the man who slew him. May he among the citizens who will not likewise thus think and act be accursed of the god; may the fruits of the earth be denied him, his wife deprived of children, and on himself the fate of this day and yet a worse descend!

Throughout the whole of this speech the terrible "irony of fate" is revealed. Œdipus will fight for the murdered man *as for a father*: if the murderer is discovered *at his own hearth*, may the curse descend upon himself! But, together with the terrible "irony of fate," we see another factor at work—the terrible impetuosity of the man.

The people withdraw; the elders of Thebes alone remain, protesting their innocence, and counselling the king to seek further help at the mouth of one who knows the mind of the god, and stands with Apollo "as a prince with a prince," even Teiresias the seer.

This also, Œdipus replies, has been already thought of—already, by the advice of Kreon, has he sent twice to summon Teiresias, and, even as he speaks, the elders hail the approach of the venerable man. Teiresias is blind; his steps are guided by a youth who leads him, but the eyes of his mind are open. "In him alone of mortals," say the elders, "dwells inborn truth."

Œdipus lays the case before Teiresias with pathos and dignity. Nothing, he says, is hid from him as seer in heaven or in earth. Let him not therefore grudge the word of revelation conveyed to him by omens<sup>1</sup> or in any other way. "Save thyself and the city," he urges; "save me, save us from this guilt, this *miasma*, towards the dead; to thee we look, for *to help*, so far as means and strength are given, is for man the noblest task."

But to the appeal the seer makes no answer. He stands apart, striving, as it were, with some intolerable thought. "Woe! woe!" he murmurs to himself; "how awful is it to be wise where wisdom profits not!" If he had but remembered this, never would he have ventured there that day.

The king is amazed—why is it that Teiresias comes to him thus cast down?

"Suffer me to depart," is the only response; "'twill be easier both for thee and me, if in this thou hearken to me."

"There speakest thou not well," Œdipus rejoins, "nor kindly, in that thou withholdest from the State which nourished thee thy seer-word. . . . By the gods, I beseech thee—refuse us not thy counsel. See! we all as suppliants here implore thee."

"And all know not what ye do," replies the seer. "Never shall I speak the word that reveals thy ruin."

Out flames the hidden fire. Has not Œdipus sworn that he who withholds his knowledge shall be put under the ban, and is he now to be thwarted to his very face? "What sayest thou," he demands fiercely; "'tis not of knowledge that thou speakest. Nay, but thou wouldst betray us, wouldst give up the city to destruction!"

"I would not give pain unto myself or thee," rejoins the old man calmly. "Why without reason reproachest thou me thus? From me thou shalt have no answer."

<sup>1</sup> Literally, by birds. See *ante*, p. 260.

"Thou wilt not answer, miscreant (thou worst of evil-doers)?—a very stone wouldst thou anger, standing thus unmoved, relentless."

"My mind thou blamest," rejoins the seer. "What dwelleth in thine own thou seest not, and yet reproachest me!"

"Who, without anger, could hear such words as these," retorts Œdipus, "wherewith upon the State thou throwest scorn?"

"It will draw nigh," replies the seer, "although my silence veils it."

"What will draw nigh behoves thee now to tell me."

"No further will I speak," replies Teiresias, turning away. "Rage in thine anger—and were it the wildest—if thou wilt."

"Yea, in mine anger I will not keep silence," retorts Œdipus, now transported beyond all thought of prudence. "Know then what I opine—'tis thou hast planned this deed and been accomplice in it, save only that with hands thou didst not slay him; but, wert thou not blind, the work itself I'd say was thine, and thine alone."

It is now the turn of the seer. Thus challenged, he solemnly bids Œdipus himself abide by the decree which he but now has issued. "From this day forth," he says, "speak not to these" (pointing to the elders), "nor yet to me. 'Tis thou who hast defiled the land. . . . *Thou art the man, the murderer whom thou seekest.*"

This scene is sufficient of itself to show us how Sophocles works out the problem of the "doom" of Œdipus. The generous, high-minded ruler is not "overtaken" by calamity; he himself courts it, *leaps into it*. There is another side to the character of Œdipus, or rather, as we may perhaps more truly say, there is a something underlying his whole nature, an ardent fiery spirit, of which his zeal and warm-heartedness are but some of the manifestations. Œdipus is not only generous, manly, helpful, ready to devise, prompt to act—but impetuous, eager, self-willed, impatient of contradiction, as we have seen—hot-headed to the last degree.

Such faults as these we are ready to condone; they are, we say, "chivalrous" faults, the faults of a noble nature. True; but faults nevertheless: they are the outcome of that "overstepping of the bounds" which, like the anger of an Achilles or the too-eager ambition of a Hector, brings destruction and death in its train.

Teiresias wishes Œdipus well; fain would he keep back "the word that unveils his ruin," but Œdipus himself makes this impossible. He has reviled the servant of Apollo as "worst of evil-doers," accused him without a shadow of evidence of perpetrating the murder, and scoffed at his seer's gift—and all this publicly before the leading men of the city.

But Œdipus cannot stop here—the seer is beyond his reach, for his person is sacred. The anger seething within him must find a vent, and his suspicions fall upon Kreon, his brother-in-law. Had not Kreon advised him to summon Teiresias? Him he accuses next of planning with the seer to effect his destruction by throwing the guilt of Laius' murder upon him, that he (Kreon) may thus obtain possession of the throne. Acting upon the fury inspired by this idea, Œdipus behaves towards Kreon even more tyrannically. Hardly will he allow him to speak in self-defence, and threatens him, not with banishment only, but with death.

The "fate," or "doom," or "curse" of Œdipus is summed up in the pregnant words of the old seer (*Œd. Tyr.*, 379):—

"Not Kreon is thy bane—'tis thou thyself unto thyself!"

The real curse on Œdipus is in him, in the fierce current of impetuosity which drives him on. This reaches its height when the fatal truth is demonstrated



beyond a doubt—when Œdipus the king is identified with Swollen-of-foot, the new-born infant found on Cithæron with tortured ankles, rescued by a kindly herdsman and conveyed to Corinth; when Œdipus of Corinth, again, is identified with the youth who in the Schiste hard by Delphi slays, single-handed, Laius, king of Thebes, and four of his attendants, the fifth alone escaping to unravel the mystery; when this same youth, again, proves to be none other than the reader of the riddle, the conqueror of the Sphinx, the husband of Jocaste, and present king of Thebes. When all this comes into the broad light of day, then does the current of passionate emotion swell into the flood that bursts all bounds. Unable to bear the shame and horror of circumstance in which he finds himself entangled, unable to endure the taunts of those who henceforth will have for “Œdipus the famed” no kinder name than “Œdipus the murderer, the parricide, the husband of his mother, the *miasma* that has defiled the land,” unable to meet the eyes of those whom but now he has unjustly accused and threatened—Œdipus rushes from the spot, and in the agony of despair stabs his own eyes again and again, until he has deprived himself of sight.

Years after, Œdipus himself acknowledges that this self-inflicted punishment was far beyond what justice called for. “All unknowing,” he says with perfect truth (*Œd. Col.*, 273), “I went—whither I went.” His parents had done of set purpose what they did, and therefore when Jocaste, on learning the fulfilment of the Oracle (which she had despised, and boasts of having outwitted), makes away with herself, she does it to escape well-earned shame. With Œdipus the case is reversed; he has been far more sinned against than sinning. It was not of intent that *he* did what he did, and the motive it is that makes the difference. A man of calmer, more reflective temperament would have recognised this, and been content to abide the verdict of Delphi and the State—withdrawal from the land was one of the alternatives given by the Oracle. But Œdipus is too proud to await the judgment of others; he himself will take the word and pronounce the sentence upon himself, a sentence which leaves him, by his own act, absolutely helpless and defenceless, dependent upon others, the very sport of circumstance.

One point, however, still remains dark. Granted that Œdipus inflicts upon himself a punishment altogether disproportionate to a sin committed involuntarily and in ignorance, how came it that such a man, so generous and noble, is suffered by the gods to fall into this involuntary sin?

To answer the question as Sophocles answers it, we must go back in the hero's history and see him in his youthful days at Corinth. He is present at a banquet there, when one of the company, flushed with wine, taunts him with not being what he supposes himself to be, son of the king of the land. Œdipus resents the slur thus cast upon him. Hardly can he await the coming of the day in order to question his supposed parents, the royal pair, as to the truth of the statement. They reject the insinuation indignantly, but Œdipus is not satisfied; he broods over the matter, and finally leaves Corinth secretly in order to set his mind at rest by consulting the Oracle at Delphi.

But he receives the terrible warning of what is to be—that he will “slay his father and wed his mother”—and with characteristic impetuosity seeks no further counsel, but at once interprets the Oracle as referring to those whom he has been wont to call “father” and “mother,” although, as we have seen, he has already received a hint that the royal couple of Corinth do not really stand in that relation to him.

In order to escape the threatened danger, then, he resolves not to return again to his supposed mother-city, and, starting in the opposite direction,

proceeds until he arrives at the Triple Way, or Schiste, a narrow glen in which three ways leading up from other parts of Greece to Delphi converge.

Suddenly a little cavalcade of five emerges from the Theban road. In the midst is a chariot in which is seated an old man with flowing snow-white hair; before him walks a herald with wand of office.

Now, in estimating what follows, we must bear in mind three important points which would be present to the mind of every Hellene who heard the Sophoclean version of the legend:—

(1) That an old man, bound on an official mission, and especially one of a sacred character (as the immediate vicinity of Delphi here betokened), was himself sacred for the time.

(2) That the person of a herald was universally regarded as inviolable.

(3) That it was absolutely impossible for the chariot to move out of the wheel-ruts cut for the passage of vehicles in the rocky path.<sup>1</sup> Hence it was here part of the herald's duty to clear the way before it.

Imagine now this narrow Triple Way, and the proud youth, wrapped in his own gloomy thoughts and brooding as he goes upon his trouble, suddenly confronted with the herald. The road is not wide enough for two, the carriage cannot turn aside; who is to yield? Intentionally, so Œdipus believes, the driver jostles him from the path, and in so doing is encouraged by the occupant of the chariot. Œdipus is in no mood to be trifled with; his blood is up, and, as he himself admits, "in anger" he strikes the driver. Upon this, the old man raises his iron-pointed staff, to bring it down with deadly aim upon the stranger's head. Quick as thought, Œdipus is before him, throws him from his seat, and, in the end, slays the whole party, excepting the one attendant who escapes, and, to save himself from reproach (and worse), gives out that his master had been attacked and slain by a robber band.

Embassies to Delphi were events of common occurrence in the days of Sophocles, and in the narrow Triple Way many a time a procession going up to inquire of the Oracle must have met a procession coming down, without any such catastrophe as that pictured in the drama taking place. Those returning, their mission fulfilled, would recognise the greater urgency of the rival procession, and would quietly give place. How came it then that, in this case, where not two processions, but a solitary pedestrian and a little embassy, met, results so dire occurred? Bearing in mind the impetuous conduct of Œdipus towards the seer whom all Thebes venerates, recollecting the gratuitous provocation addressed to him, "thou worst of evil-doers!" the spectator of the Sophoclean drama would be at no loss for an answer. The encounter in the Triple Way is an encounter of passions. "Like father, like son"—neither Laius nor Œdipus will give way; each of them has not *on* but *in* him "the curse of the race," the "*hybris* that makes the tyrant," the imperious, haughty temper that will brook no opposition.

This is the key to the situation. The comment of Teiresias would have been:—

"'Twas not the meeting was thy bane—'*twas thou thyself unto thyself.*'"

"Anger," says Kreon to Œdipus in the companion drama (*Œd. Col.*, 855), "has ever been thy ruin"—words spoken by an enemy, but true nevertheless. Just as the whole tragic story of Lear grows out of his momentary frenzy of indignation against Cordelia's supposed ingratitude, so does the "ruin" of Œdipus—the whole complication in which he finds himself involved—spring from the sudden outburst of anger against those in the Schiste, who (so he imagines) would "drive him" from the way by force. Œdipus has in that

<sup>1</sup> See C. Curtius, *Gesch. des Wegebahns bei der Griechen*, pp. 14, 15.



short hour brought himself within the range of the "curse," *i.e.* of the penalty, for he too has broken the great unwritten law. He is no parricide in the real sense of the term, but blood crieth from the ground; the stain of blood-guilt is upon him, and we hear of no attempt at purification or expiation.<sup>1</sup>

Now we are in a position to understand the real force of the grand chorus of the elders from which we have already quoted (*Æd. Tyr.*, 863 *et seq.*):—

"Ah! were it the lot of my life to keep in sacred purity each word and work, true to the laws set forth on high! For they are born in heaven—Olympus alone is their sire, neither hath mortal nature conceived them, nor ever hath forgetfulness lulled them into slumber. No! for in them is a mighty God, and He waxeth not old."

*Hybris* breeds the tyrant—*hybris*, surfeited (in vain) on many things, things neither fitting nor expedient, when it hath scaled ambition's summit, down the steep height into endless ruin plungeth.

Some of our readers may possibly be inclined to say: Why press the old legend thus? Why take it all so much *au sérieux*? The answer lies on the surface—our master Sophocles took it most seriously, because it was serious to his age-fellows. To those who thought at all, the story was a great blot on the justice and goodness of the Divine power. It was a life and death matter to them, therefore, that the paralysing theory of the domination of "fate" should be exposed, that they should be enabled to see how a man's real "fate" is determined by himself, that the reaping in a life is a *natural* result of the sowing. On four different occasions in the career of his hero, Sophocles shows how *Cædipus* held his fate in his own hands:—

(a) *If* at the very outset *Cædipus* had acted prudently, and sought clearer light as to his parentage, he would never have gone on to Thebes. We must endeavour to look at the matter from the Greek standpoint, and bear in mind that the "history" of *Cædipus*—that is, the main outline of the saga, as known to every nation in Hellas—was "historical" to them in our sense of the word. We know from actual history that there were several ways of putting a question to the Oracle. Xenophon, *e.g.*, tells us that Socrates rebuked him for not having put his inquiry at Delphi (regarding the advisability of his joining the expedition of Cyrus) in the right way. He received an answer, indeed, but an indirect one, although Loxias<sup>2</sup> could give sufficient counsel on occasion. A *Cædipus* would say, probably, that here *Cædipus* had been too hasty.

(b) *If*, again, *Cædipus* had preserved his self-control (or, to use a commonplace, kept his temper) in the Triple Way, the whole tragedy could never have taken place.

(c) *If*, later, he had abstained from unjust accusations and threats, the public *dénouement* would have been avoided. Teiresias is anxious to save him.

<sup>1</sup> *Cædipus* excuses himself later by saying that what he did was done in self-defence; but it is evident from the story, as he himself tells it, that the "defence" was, in the first place, not of his life but of his dignity, for the old man does not raise his staff until his servant has been struck down. *Cædipus* it is that begins the fray. It is necessary, moreover, as stated above, in estimating the moral guilt of *Cædipus*, as it would present itself to a Greek of the age of Sophocles, to remember the sacredness that attached to the herald's office. No matter how insulting might be the message which he was sent to deliver, the herald was regarded as a neutral party and protected accordingly. Herodotus tells us two Spartans proceeded to Susa and offered themselves as living victims to the great king in expiation of the crime committed by their countrymen, who had killed the Persian heralds sent to demand earth and water of the Greeks. The presence of the herald in the embassy is twice mentioned by the poet, as though to emphasise its sacred character and claim to be respected.

<sup>2</sup> The name given to the Delphic Apollo on account of the "crookedness" or ambiguity of his responses.

(d) If, finally, strong in the consciousness of his own rectitude, he had left judgment to Delphi, the final catastrophe would have been averted.

The "fate" of Œdipus, viewed thus in the "common-sense" light of events upon which any man could form a judgment, is something very different from the awful, mysterious "fate" of the popular mind, the "something" which gods and men alike were powerless to resist. Fate, as Sophocles shows, is here nothing less than *hybris* in one of its hydra-headed manifestations, and, in his exposure of the popular fallacy, our master stands beside Homer in his exposure of the *atē*.<sup>1</sup> Every age has its veil, more or less cleverly woven, ready to throw over the ugly thing called "sin" and its consequences, and he is the real teacher of his age who withdraws that veil and shows the thing concealed in all its nakedness.

True, Sophocles nowhere directly blames his hero. Does Shakespeare anywhere blame Lear? The sufferings which both heroes endure constitute, to the mind of both poets, the "blame." Direct reproach, indeed, comes from the lips of bystanders and enemies in both cases; but nowhere is the artist lost in the preacher. Sophocles and Shakespeare are both content to give their personages fair play; they tell their own story in their own way, and the progress of events reveals the moral. Thus it is that Œdipus and Lear, with all their faults, their violent outbursts and their unjust judgments, remain great and lovable—thus it is that our fullest sympathy is enlisted on their side, whilst our moral judgment on their acts remains free.

### ŒDIPUS AT COLONUS

The companion drama opens upon one of the most touching scenes in the whole range of literature. An old man is seen approaching; his dignified mien betokens that the frail body is indwelt by a noble spirit, but suffering, severe and terrible, is stamped upon his face (*Œd. Col.*, 75, 149, 555). He is sightless, and his steps are led by a young girl (*Œd. Col.*, 170). It is Œdipus, once the famed, the stalwart, the energetic ruler and benefactor, now the rejected, the feeble, the homeless, the beggar.

To understand the change, we must premise that the earnest plea of Œdipus, at the great crisis of his life, to be permitted to leave the scene of his shame and agony, had been disallowed (in sheer caprice, as it would seem) by Kreon, who then assumed the reins of power. Later, after the unfortunate king has in a measure become reconciled to his position and seeks for solace in the joys of home, this consolation, with even greater caprice and cruelty unheard of, is denied him by, not Kreon only, but his own two sons, Polyneikes and Eteocles. Arrived at man's estate, they would share the sovereignty of Thebes between them, and to this intent drive forth from the city the father who might, perchance, stand in the way of their ambitious plans. Bent down with suffering and sorrow, feeble and blind, Œdipus is turned adrift to ask of the charity of strangers the means of supporting bare life.

His daughters alone are faithful to him. Antigone will not leave him; Ismene remains at Thebes, but only in order that she may minister to his wants as opportunity offers and keep him informed of the course of events.

For weary months, and may be years, the old man and Antigone have led this wandering life, dependent on the bounty of strangers (*Œd. Col.*, 5), "asking for little, and receiving less." At length they have reached a resting-

<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, p. 287.



place. Behind them is the dreary way to Thebes, with its mournful memories, its strifes and rivalries; before them is a lovely spot, set apart and sacred to some deity. The air is full of sweet scents and sights and sounds; golden crowns and narcissus, heavy with dew, shine out amidst the grass; vine and laurel and olive cast around a pleasant shade; the voice of the nightingale hidden among the clustering ivy, and the murmuring flow of the Cephissus-stream, with its never-slumbering waters, strike sweetly upon the ear, bidding the wanderers softly welcome. A House of God it is, a peaceful, gentle spot, and here the wearied, troubled soul of Œdipus is destined to find rest.

"Child of the blind old man, Antigone!" he says (*Œd. Col.*, 14 *et seq.*, 668 *et seq.*), "what country have we reached? What city? Who this day will welcome with scant gifts the wanderer Œdipus? Little he asks, and still less receives, yet this suffices me, for sufferings and long time, and my own true heart, have taught me therewith to be content.<sup>1</sup> But see, child, if there be not here some resting-place—one open to all comers, or sacred to the gods."

Antigone describes the scene before them, adding that in the distance there rise the towers of a city, which she knows to be Athens. The wanderers take their seat beneath the shady trees; but hardly have they done so when they are accosted by a man, a native of the place, who has perceived their movements, and, hastening to them with all speed, bids them arise and withdraw. The place wherein they sit is sacred, holy ground that may not be trodden by foot of man, for it is consecrate to the fearful deities, daughters of Earth and Darkness, known to the Athenian folk as Eumenidæ, gracious goddesses; to all other peoples of Hellas by a name which may not be outspoken—Erinyes, Furies, the deities who bear in remembrance and punish sin.

Œdipus receives the intelligence with a strange joy. "Now," he says, "may they graciously receive the suppliant, for from this place do I go forth no more." Not in vain has he been led thus to take shelter within the sacred spot—he recognises in this the fulfilment of a promise of Apollo, that when he shall have reached the last land, taken up the suppliant's seat, and been hospitably received at the shrine of the venerable goddesses, his sufferings and his wanderings shall have an end.

Yes! Œdipus, reviled by vulgar minds as "parricide"—and worse—now stands under the protection of the very powers who seek out and avenge blood-guilt. The spirit has once more triumphed over the letter of the law,<sup>2</sup> and Œdipus is free from curse and penalty. Pathos mathos, learning by suffering, has done its work, and, purified by long years of calamity nobly borne, Œdipus is accepted of the Invisible Justice. And not accepted merely. The Divine justice does nothing by halves. Œdipus has honoured it by patient submission under the penalty of his own "self-chosen woe." Now the Divine justice will honour him openly and in the sight of all men. Two Oracles have gone forth concerning Œdipus—one, that of the contending factions in Thebes, that party alone can triumph which has with it Œdipus, the despised and rejected; the other, that his very grave shall be a gain to the land which hospitably receives him at the last—an atē, self-chosen "ruin," to the land which thrusts him out.

In the feeble, sightless old man, therefore, centre the "fates" of two States great in Hellas—according to their treatment of defenceless Œdipus shall be their lot in time to come.

<sup>1</sup> This is hardly to be understood in St. Paul's sense. Œdipus is content with little because his own nature, his *gennaton*, literally his noble descent, forbids his seeking or asking for the more that would be grudged him.

<sup>2</sup> See *ante*, under "*Æschylus*," p. 378.

This is the turning-point in the drama ; the question of "fate" now takes a wider range, and is seen shaping itself in the conduct of the representatives of these States, Theseus of Athens and Kreon of Thebes, no less than in that of the family of Œdipus. Œdipus as yet only knows one of these Oracles, but that is enough ; and we can understand the eagerness with which he inquires the name of the place at which he has arrived, the goal so momentous to him, and of its ruler. The place is Colonus, the ruler Theseus, replies the peasant who has warned him before as to the character of the sanctuary wherein he sits. Œdipus earnestly begs that one of the townsfolk may be sent to summon the king : his message shall be to this effect—that, "for a little present succour, a great reward awaits him." What reward has a blind man to offer ? demurs the man ; but there is something about the stranger that overawes him, and he departs to do his bidding. Will the king be equally willing, and give his succour to this stranger, whose sole claim to his protection is—his weakness, the fact that he is a suppliant ? Time will show.

After the messenger has gone, the elders of the community appear, in hot haste, upon the scene. Œdipus, however, has vanished from sight. Warned by past experience, the hapless old man and his defenceless guide have retreated amid the trees, hiding themselves until they can judge from the tone of the new-comers whether or not they may safely venture forth. The elders pour forth their lament over the stranger who has presumed to tread the enclosure of goddesses so easily roused to ire, whose very name they fear to speak aloud, past whose sanctuary they themselves are wont to hasten, speechless and silent.

Upon hearing this, Œdipus comes forward and claims their pity. The elders are moved with compassion by his appearance, but they insist upon his withdrawing from the grove—they will hold parley with him only where it is permitted unto mortals to speak.

Œdipus is sore distressed. He stands where he does with the sanction of Apollo, under the protection of the goddesses ; and now these peasants will drag him forth from this, his last refuge. He turns piteously to Antigone : "What shall I do, my daughter ?"

Antigone, with the quick tact which experience has taught her, urges him to follow the wishes of the townsfolk, and Œdipus yields. The incident, trifling as it appears, suffices to show the once impetuous Œdipus in the light of the *pathos mathos*. He leaves his secure retreat without further remonstrance, only bidding the townspeople do him no injustice, since he is trusting himself to them ; whereupon, like true Athenians, they assure him of his perfect safety in their care. Œdipus then bids Antigone guide him to a spot where reverence will allow of his speaking and listening ; he will not "fight against necessity." He is, however, to be yet more tried, for they insist upon learning his name.

Again he turns to Antigone with the despairing cry : "My child, what will become of me ?" and again Antigone urges him, now that the worst has come, to yield to the wish of the people. No sooner, however, have the superstitious old men heard his name and lineage than they order him forthwith to leave the town. The story of Œdipus with its horrors has travelled fast, and they fear lest his presence there should bring a curse upon them. Antigone pleads for her father and for herself ; she implores them by all that they hold dear to have pity upon them. In vain—the peasants are inexorable ; they do pity both father and daughter, but still, forth they must go. Œdipus then, with a burst of indignant scorn, appeals to their patriotism. What then is fair fame ? he asks. To what purpose is the repute of Athens—that she of all States is most God-



fearing, that she alone is strong to save the stranger in distress, that she alone is rich to help—if, trembling at a name, they would now drive him forth? Then follows the pathetic account of his life: “All unknowing I went—whither I went.” (Let them take heed, they who profess to honour the gods, lest they now anger the gods, for he comes among them holy and God-fearing, and bearing a blessing to the citizens.) Let them await the arrival of their ruler—then they will understand all.

To this the elders, moved—despite their fear—by reverence, readily agree. That the king will know what to do in the matter is enough for them.

The decision is not made a moment too soon, for some one on horseback is seen approaching. It is Ismene come to warn her father of impending danger. The two sons of Œdipus are engaged in a deadly strife. Eteocles, the younger, has seized the throne, and driven forth the first-born, Polyneikes, who has fled to Argos, married into the royal house, and made there a league (the famous League of the Seven Princes) with the chieftains of Peloponnesus. He is resolved, with the help of his allies, either to regain Thebes for himself or to destroy the city.

At this crisis Delphi has sent forth the Oracle with which we are already acquainted. The sons must seek him whom they have cast out—alive or dead he must be found; on this depend their prosperity and safety. Thus, as Ismene truly says (*Œd. Col.*, 394): They who overthrew Œdipus (in the days of his pride)—the gods—now exalt him, for the salvation of Thebes hangs upon her winning him.

Ismene then informs her father that Kreon is on his track, and will speedily appear as ambassador for Eteocles, the younger son, and for Thebes. He comes, however, not to carry out the Oracle in the spirit—to honour the old man by restoring him to his home and to the throne. No! the intention is simply to fulfil the letter of the decree—to gain possession of the person of Œdipus and keep him in captivity on the outskirts of the State. Its borders he shall not be permitted to pass, lest he should prove a stumbling-block in the way of ambitious plans.

“Will they shroud my limbs in Theban dust?” asks the old man quietly—*i.e.* will they honour me in my death, if not in my life?

This last poor token of respect, Ismene rejoins, is also to be withheld. On the plea of the blood-guilt which he has incurred, Œdipus is to be cast out from the sepulchre of his fathers.

“Does either of my sons know of this?” inquires the old man again with that same calmness.

Alas! both know of it; and both know also that if Œdipus passes to the unseen world unreconciled to them, without having forgiven them, it will be the ruin of themselves and of Thebes. They know this, and yet, in the madness of their lust for power, they set their ambition before their father. The decision of Œdipus is quickly made (*Œd. Col.*, 419). Never shall they gain possession of him! And in the bitterness of his soul he utters a prayer which shows how far apart are ancient notions of the *pathos mathos* from the Christian ideal. Œdipus is indeed purified and cleansed from his own blood-guilt, yet he now prays that the gods may never extinguish the “fated” feud which rages between the unnatural brothers. May he who in Thebes now possesses throne and sceptre not abide therein! May he who has gone forth never return thither!

The feud between the brothers is in the popular legend what Œdipus calls it in the drama, a “destined” feud—*pepromenēn*, ordained of fate; but what the “fate” is, his next words show. For, turning to the elders of

Colonus, who have overheard all that has passed between father and daughter, he tells the pitiful story of his exile—how, when he who had begotten them was driven forth shamefully from his fatherland, his sons sought not either to keep or to defend him. No! they suffered him, their father, to be proclaimed an outlaw by the herald's voice. Nor did this happen in the hot zeal of that fateful day when death itself was coveted by Œdipus. No! when the slow course of years had soothed his woe, and taught him that his self-inflicted punishment exceeded his involuntary sin, this was the time chosen by the State to banish him, and those who could have prevented it, his sons, would not even *will* the effort. Rather than speak the little word that would have saved him, they suffered him to be cast forth—a beggar, blind, homeless, and forsaken. But for his daughters Œdipus must have perished. These maidens, so far as their feeble strength allowed, have provided him with the means of life and safety. As for his sons, they have chosen before the honour, nay, the very life of their father, sceptre and throne and pomp of power. Therefore never shall they have that father for an ally, never will he fight upon their side; nor will the sovereignty in Thebes bring advantage to them. This Œdipus knows, for Phœbus, god of light, has revealed it to him. And they know it. No god is needed to reveal the truth that the grave of an outraged and rejected father must be, to sons like these, a danger. *Their own hearts could tell them that* (*Œd. Col.*, 403).

Is then the "destined" feud between the brothers the result of a terrible fate, a mysterious and awful something, which they have had no power to avoid or avert? We know not. The "little word" of filial indignation, of manly pleading on behalf of him who once had saved Thebes, would have saved Œdipus, and, in restoring to him his rightful place in Thebes, have saved themselves. Not "fate," but retribution it is that now hangs over them.

Œdipus has still to face his own impending danger. The citizens of Colonos, now thoroughly enlisted on his side, urge him to conciliate the venerable deities into whose sanctuary he had ventured. Œdipus is willing to do this, although he knows that he is accepted of the invisible Power behind the deities. The rites to be gone through, as it proves, are impossible for the sightless, worn-out man; he cannot himself perform them, but sends Ismene with the words so full of meaning, which we already know:—

"*One soul can make conciliation for ten thousand, if it approach with pure intent.*"

Ismene goes, and shortly afterwards appears Theseus the king, the Sophoclean embodiment of all the chivalry and nobleness of Athens. His character will engage our attention later. Here we need only say that spontaneously, of his own generous nature, he offers help to Œdipus, and makes the God-given office which he holds, defender of the suppliant, a reality. With him Œdipus finds that protection in life, that honour in death, which are denied him by his own children and his countrymen.

Not too soon is the covenant made, for Kreon is seen approaching with a troop of followers—Kreon the sophist, the hypocrite, the man "noble in words but in deeds deceitful." He concludes a long and artfully worded address to the men of Colonos and to Œdipus by urging the latter to return to his fatherland and to his home. Œdipus is too well acquainted with the nature of the man and with the scheme to fall into the trap. He receives the oily words with an outburst of the old fire. Home! thou comest to take me with thee, but not home. And therefore the avenging spirit of Œdipus shall indeed go with him, but the coveted bodily presence he shall not have.

When Kreon sees that smooth words avail not, he has recourse to threats,



and then to violence. He bids his attendants seize the maidens and carry them off by force. Deprived of his "double staff," the hapless old man will be fain to follow. Kreon, however, has reckoned without his host. He has sent away his bodyguard, thinking that he has to do with Œdipus alone; but, on advancing to lay hold on the old man, he finds himself a prisoner in the hands of the elders of Colonus. Their shouts and cries for assistance speedily reach the ears of the king, who is engaged in offering sacrifice at a neighbouring altar. In a twinkling Theseus understands the situation, and horsemen are sent off to guard the mountain-passes, through which alone the fugitives can make good their flight into Boeotia. The stratagem succeeds, and after short delay the agonised father regains his treasures, his all, his "eyes" through whom he sees and holds communion with the outer world.

This incident seems to make clear a point which it was necessary that Sophocles should take into account in a version of the legend intended primarily for Athenians. In his time the existence of the hidden grave of Œdipus somewhere at Colonus was popularly believed to be a "fact"; and it was regarded as a fact of importance to Athens, inasmuch as the presence of the grave of the old Theban king in their midst was supposed to ensure success to Athens in the skirmishes which took place between her and her Theban rivals. But how came it that the old Theban king was buried in their midst? *Answer:* Cast out ungratefully by his fatherland, Athens, protector of the weak, received him. And his "protection" the poet emphasises in the scene which we have just witnessed—the rescue and restoration of the old man's "double staff" by Theseus, a parable in which are set forth, truthfully enough, the national characteristics of the two peoples.

Modestly withdrawing from the mutual rejoicing and tearful thanks of the little group, Theseus, before he leaves, announces that another suppliant has claimed his protection. A man from Argos sits by the altar of Poseidon petitioning that he may have a few words with Œdipus, and thereafter be allowed safe conduct to his own country. When Œdipus learns that the new-comer is from Argos he divines that it can be none other than his own son, his eldest-born, Polyneikes. *Him*, he affirms, he cannot, will not see.

Theseus, who, as ruler and protector, is bound impartially to both suppliants alike, intercedes for Polyneikes that he may at least have the interview which he desires, and warns Œdipus that in rejecting the request he may himself be leaving a higher consideration out of the account (*Œd. Col.*, 1179).

"When the *seat* (*i.e.* of the suppliant) demands it, look well that thou respect the providence of the god."

Antigone joins her petition to his, and pleads nobly with all the force of yet another of the great unwritten laws (*Œd. Col.*, 1189):—

"Thou didst beget him, father; *therefore*, and were he guilty of the worst of crimes against thee, *it is not lawful for thee with evil to requite him.*" It is not *themis* to requite evil with evil in the family—a noble anticipation of the Christian *themis* in the larger family of the human race.

Œdipus yields, and Polyneikes is allowed to come in person and plead his own cause. In the magnificent scene which ensues the interest of the drama culminates. Polyneikes appears in tears, which are probably genuine, inasmuch as he himself is now also in misfortune. Shall he begin, he asks, by lamenting his own fate, or theirs to whom he finds himself united in misery, strangers in a strange land? He is aghast at the terrible aspect of his father—the miserable, travel-stained dress, the unkempt hair fluttering around the eyeless head. And he, alas! sees it all too late. He himself, the worst of men, bears witness against himself of this his fault; his father shall hear of

his repentance from none other's lips. But beside Zeus on the throne, helper in every work, is seated the Aidōs—mercy. "Let her, my father, stand also by thy side. Wherein I once transgressed against thee, for that there still is healing, but not renewal of the sin. Thou art silent? Speak but a word to me, my father! turn not from me. Thou wilt not answer? wilt spurn me, wilt let me go without a word to tell me why thou art thus wroth?"

Œdipus still remains ominously silent—not a sound escapes his lips—and Polyneikes implores his sisters to intercede for him that he, the suppliant, protected of the god, be not dismissed without reply.

Antigone bids him proceed and tell the object of his visit, for many words, she says, awakening joy or grief or pity, have even to dumb lips often given voice.

Thus encouraged, Polyneikes unfolds the tale with which we are already acquainted. He relates how he has been driven out of Thebes—he, the elder-born—by his younger brother Eteocles, who has gained the crown, not by force of eloquence nor yet of arms. No! simply because he won the people—a true sign to Polyneikes (read in the light of the recent Oracle) that the event had "its root in the Erinyes," the avenger of his father's cause. Ejected from Thebes, he had gone to Argos in the Dorian land, married the sister of Adrastus, prince of Argos, and won as allies all who in Peloponnesus were held as first in rank and best of spearmen. Already the seven bands of the Sevenfold League with their chieftains encompass the plain of Thebes, and all as suppliants turn to Œdipus and beg most humbly for his help, since, if Oracles are to be believed, the victory shall be with those on whose side Œdipus is found. All implore him, therefore, that he will desist from his heavy wrath against one who is himself taking up arms to avenge injustice, to punish the brother who has driven him from the fatherland. "I beseech thee by the ancestors, by the gods of our race, that thou yield to me in this. O see! we are beggars and strangers; thou thyself art in like case; we live by fawning upon others, thou and I, ruined by the same fate. And *he*—O miserable I!—*he* plays the king at home in luxury, makes open scorn of us. Him, if thou wilt but lend thine aid, I shall cast down without delay or trouble, and in restoring thee to thine own halls I shall restore myself, and thrust him out by force. These things I shall accomplish by thine aid; without thee, for me is no salvation."

From the foregoing it will be seen that the "many words" of Polyneikes do not flow, as Antigone had fondly hoped, from a repentant heart; neither joy nor grief nor pity could they arouse—nothing but disgust and indignation. From first to last the ego is predominant: "I, wretched I, am a beggar; he lives in luxury. . . . In restoring thee I restore myself." Not the desire to fulfil the command of the Invisible Justice by honouring his father, but to make use of the letter of the Oracle for his own purposes, is evident throughout. And not only so, but he would associate his father probably with his own contemptible career: "We are ruined by the same fate; we live by fawning upon others." What! Œdipus live by *fawning* upon others, wheedling, cajoling others! Œdipus, whose own noble nature has bid him abstain from asking more than the mere crust that has kept him in life! Œdipus, who has submitted patiently to his "fate," nor even dreamt of avenging himself by taking up arms against his fatherland—he to be now dragged down to the level of a selfish hypocrite like this!

We are amazed at the calmness with which Œdipus begins his reply. Not a word would have escaped his lips, he says, but for the intercession of Theseus. For his sake Polyneikes shall have an answer, but such an one as shall never gladden his life.



"Thou evil-doer," he proceeds, addressing himself to his son, "when throne and sceptre yet were thine in Thebes, then didst thou thyself drive out thy father, madest him homeless, forcedst him to wear this robe, at sight of which thou weapest, *now* that like misery hath come upon thyself. Not to be wept over is't by me, but to be borne so long as life shall last in memory of thee, the murderer. 'Tis thou hast brought me into this distress; 'twas thou who then didst thrust me out; through thee I am a wanderer, begging of others my daily bread. And had I not begotten these my children, these maidens here, to be my succourers, long since should I have ceased to be. *They* have saved me, *they* have nourished me—*men* they are, not women, in bearing all that I must bear. As for ye twain, some other hath begotten thee, not I. The god of vengeance looketh not upon ye yet, as then he will, when once these spearmen move on Thebes' walls. Not with thee is it given to o'erthrow the city. Nay! ere then, weltering in thy blood thou shalt fall, and thy brother with thee. These curses I sent before upon ye, and now again do I invoke them to come and fight upon my side, that ye may learn that reverence belongeth unto parents, not dishonour. If justice still, by law primæval, sit upon the throne by Zeus, these curses shall take possession of *thy* seat and throne. Away from me, thou renegade, thou miserable wretch, thou worst of evil-doers," pursues the old man, his patience at length breaking down, as, with an impetuosity that reminds us of Œdipus in the Triple Way, he invokes his fearful allies from murky Tartarus, invokes the Furies, invokes Ares, god of war, to perpetuate the strife between the brothers and give fulfilment to his curse.

And yet, barring this last hot outburst, let us note that, in "cursing" his unnatural sons, Œdipus sinned not, according to the ethics of his age. He is only giving them up to the punishment which, even among the chosen people, would have overtaken them. Here the unwritten law of the Greek met the written law of the Hebrew. Under the Mosaic law the sentence stood fast: "He that curseth his father or his mother, he shall surely be put to death,"<sup>1</sup> a sentence which embraced not merely the "cursing" of the lips, but the unnatural spirit which would withhold from father or mother the necessities of life or the honour due to them.<sup>2</sup>

Remembering Pindar's warning, "Most of all to reverence Kronos' son (Zeus), and never to deprive a parent of like honour," we may believe that not a Hellene in all the vast multitude who thronged the theatre of Athens to listen to the Sophoclean tragedy but would acknowledge that the sons of Œdipus had brought their "fate" upon themselves.

But let us note that Polyneikes still holds his "fate" in his own hands; he has it in his power still to withdraw, to acknowledge openly that his father's support is denied him, to beseech his confederates to give up the war which can only end disastrously for them. In this way the door of escape is still open to him, as Antigone points out, beseeching him to abandon the fatal enterprise. This Polyneikes will not do. Urged on by pride and by revenge, he will neither reveal the truth to the princes of the league, nor forego the chance of retaliation. He knows that he is doomed to fall; but knowing this, he will go on and drag into like ruin those who have espoused his cause. The comment of Antigone on this resolve (Œd. Col., 1424)—"Seest thou not how *thus* the Oracle fulfils itself?"—is the keynote to the whole problem of "fate."

Polyneikes is immovable. The curse not on but *in* him is the *hybris* of

<sup>1</sup> Exodus xxi. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Compare our Lord's comment on this passage as expounded by the Pharisees (St. Matt. xv. 4-6).

an utter selfishness; he goes forward on his awful errand, making his last request, that after he is dead his sisters will lay him in the grave with due rites, nor suffer him to be dishonoured. Let us note this last prayer, for, as we shall presently see, it sinks into the heart of the generous Antigone and quickens a sacred instinct into life.

And now Polyneikes is gone, the "fate" of both brothers—war to the bitter end—is sealed by their own voluntary choice; the "fate" of both peoples, as determined by the possession of the tomb of Œdipus, is also sealed by their own treatment of the helpless. Thebes has cast out her former benefactor, Athens has protected the suppliant—and now the end, the expected end, of Œdipus approaches. In a short space the summons comes, and amid lightnings and thunders and other tokens of Divine interposition, Œdipus is removed from the scene of his earthly trial.

Such, in brief, is the end and consummation of the "fate" of Œdipus as interpreted by Sophocles, and a more fitting, more majestic ending for the man "more sinned against than sinning" could not be devised. It is both justice and compassion meet. Œdipus is pardoned, but he is also purified. The ardent, noble soul that found its sphere in generous deeds—"To help, this is for man the noblest duty"—has learned also the highest of life's secrets—

"One soul can make conciliation for ten thousand, if it approach with pure intent."

## ANTIGONE

Amid all the noble characters of antiquity there is not one that shines out so brightly as the Antigone of Sophocles. We have already followed her fortunes to some extent; but Œdipus and his sons have hitherto absorbed our attention and hindered our taking note of the many little loving touches wherewith, by the way as it were, our master has already sought to enlist our sympathy for his martyr-heroine before he concentrates the whole strength of his genius on the development of her "fate." For Antigone, too, has her fate—she comes of the "fated" race, and her untimely death, too, demands an explanation.

By the way then, and incidentally, we get to know Antigone. In the *Œdipus at Colonus* (345 *et seq.*) we see the young girl relinquishing without a sigh the luxury of her palace at Thebes, to become the "eyes" and the "staff" of Œdipus. "From a child, as the old man's guide," says her father, "she has shared my wanderings and my pitiable fate—often overtaken in the wild forest with naked feet and without food, exposed to storm and burning sun. She thinks not of the comforts of her home, if so be only that her father may be cared for." This is the old man's testimony to the elders of Colonus.

And then we note for ourselves, in passing, her sweet tact and maidenly reserve—with what diffidence she offers her opinion in presence of Theseus, yet with what courage she reminds the fiery Œdipus of the great unwritten law of the family—how she strives to make peace between her father and Polyneikes—with what true patriotism she urges the headstrong youth to give up his miserable plot against the fatherland—with what true insight she tells him that in carrying it out he is himself bringing the Oracle to pass, bringing his own fate on his own head; in all these little touches (and yet others, which space forbids our quoting) the poet brings before us his noblest ideal of woman. But there is something more for Antigone to do, something higher still. She has borne testimony, by word and life, to the sacredness of the visible human



ties and earthly relationships; now she must bear her witness to the sacredness of the unseen Divine ties, the relation between the spirit and its Author; and this must be done by word and *death*. Antigone has to bear witness to the truth.

When the action begins in the great tragedy which bears her name, the masterpiece of Sophocles, we see the two sisters once more in Thebes. Her father taken from her, the one thought of Antigone is to return home as quickly as possible. "Send us back to Thebes!" she says to Theseus, "if so be that we may yet prevent this mutual slaughter," and Theseus has complied with her wish. The brothers, however, have persisted in working out their own "fate": the curse of Œdipus has been fulfilled; the Argive army has been repulsed, the two brothers lie low in death, each slain by the other's hand, and Kreon has assumed the reins of power.

Antigone has summoned Ismene, her sister, to meet her secretly outside the palace gates; she has something of terrible import to impart to her. Has Ismene heard of the fresh disaster hanging over their dear ones? No, Ismene has heard nothing since the death of the brothers and the retreat of the Argive army, but that something is amiss she can see from the troubled brow of her sister.

And is there not a cause? returns Antigone. Has not Kreon just granted a resting-place to one brother only, and denied it to the other? Eteocles, so they say, is to be buried with all honour and due rites, according to the law, while the corpse of the wretched Polyneikes is to be left unburied, unwept—exposed a prey to every evil bird. And this decree, pursues Antigone with bitter irony, "the good Kreon enforces on thee and me—yea, I say, on *me*!" as though such a decree could be binding on *me*, his sister! So much in earnest, moreover, is Kreon, continues Antigone, that if any of the citizens dares to contravene the edict, he shall incur the penalty of death by stoning. "Now!" she adds, "show whether thou art truly noble, or, born of noble blood, base in thyself."

Ismene asks sorrowfully what she can do, for or against, in such circumstances; and when she learns the plan of Antigone, that they two together shall bury the dead, she exclaims in utter dismay: "*Him* thou wilt bury, despite the edict?"

"Yea, for myself I will bury him, my brother," as a sacred duty, "if not for thee. I will not be found a traitor," leaving him in the hands of his enemies.

"O unhappy thou!" Ismene can only repeat; "thou wilt do this against the word of Kreon?"

"He cannot withhold from me my own," is Antigone's calm rejoinder. Polyneikes has, as it were, committed this trust to her, and she will fulfil it.

Ismene in despair beseeches her sister to weigh the consequences of the deed—to remember the fate of father, mother, brothers—to bethink her that they two, of all the race, alone are left, and they too must perish miserably if they array against them the force of law, not heeding the decision or the power of the tyrant. "And this too we must bear in mind," she adds, "that we are women, not fitted by nature to contend with men; to the stronger we must submit in this and in things yet harder. Therefore," is Ismene's conclusion, "will I beg of those beneath to pardon me in this, seeing I am compelled thereto by force. To go beyond the bounds—is folly."

"Nor will I ask it of thee more," Antigone rejoins indignantly, adding (with just a touch of the old Œdipean spirit), "Nor, if thou now wouldest do the deed, could I have joy in sharing it with thee. Do thou what seemeth best to

thee. *I will bury him.* Right welcome will death be to me—when this is done—to rest with him, my dear one, for whom *I have sinned a holy sin.*” And then she adds the words so full of meaning (*Ant.*, 74 *et seq.*): “Longer is the time wherein I must please those below” (the Divine powers of the unseen world) “than those above—for *there I must rest for ever.* Despise thou, if so it please thee, that which is held in honour by the gods.”

“Despise it I do not,” rejoins Ismene, “but to perform the task against the will of the citizens I am powerless.”

“Cloak thou thyself with this excuse—I go to make the grave.”

Ismene begs her not to impart her desperate resolve to others. “Keep thou it secret. I will do the same.”

Antigone turns with another flash. “Ah me!” she says, “tell it out! proclaim it loud to all men! Far more hateful were it didst thou keep silence.”

Ismene shrinks from the fire which she has kindled. “How hotly, where I shudder, dost thou glow!” she says.

“Yea, for so I please those whom most it behoveth me to please.”<sup>1</sup>

“If only thou hadst the power,” expostulates Ismene; “but what thou wiltest is impossible.”

“When strength fails me, I will desist.”

“Even to seek the impossible is not fitting,” pursues the sister.

Antigone’s time and patience fail her. The precious hours wherein the deed must be done, if at all, are fleeting fast. “If thus thou speakest,” she says, once and for all, “thou wilt be hateful to me, hateful also to the dead. Let me be in this my self-willed course (my *dys-boulia*), to suffer all their sorrow. No terror can deprive me of this one thing—a noble death.”

The two then separate—Ismene to lament, in the fashion of women, over Antigone’s “self-willed course,” her *dys-boulia*; Antigone to carry out her resolution.

The foregoing sketch of the opening scene, imperfect as is the rendering, will at least have made clear two things: First, that Antigone is the true child of her father, both in the generous instinct that prompts to “help,” as “the noblest duty,” and also in the determination necessary to make the help effective. Her father’s child she also is, undoubtedly, in her impatience with Ismene’s timidity; but in estimating this, the circumstances must be taken into account. No half-hearted venture will ever succeed, and therefore Antigone will rather risk the attempt alone: “No joy could I have, now that I have seen thy hesitation, in sharing the deed with thee.”

Again we note that she speaks of her venture as a *dys-boulia*, an ill-advised, reckless act, for so she well knows it will appear in the eyes of all men. Then why does she persevere in it? Because, according to the old religious notions, the salvation of Polyneikes depends upon his burial. So long as the body remains unburied, so long must the spirit hover homeless and rejected on the confines of the realms below. Hence the importance of burial with due rites “according to the law,” the importance also to the dying man of knowing that some one, of his charity, will perform these last kindly offices for him.

If full interment were not possible, the sprinkling of the body with earth, thereby committing it symbolically to the care of the great mother, was held to be sufficient. But, above all things, it might not lie exposed, a prey to dogs and birds. The decent burial of the dead, in short, of that shrine which has been the home of the spirit, is one of the great unwritten laws

<sup>1</sup> “I would thou wert cold or hot. So then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth” (*Rev.* iii. 15, 16).



deep graven in the human heart, and therefore Antigone well knows that in "sinning this holy sin," in disobeying the decree of man that she may fulfil the command of God, she is pleasing the Divine Power with whom she herself must rest in all eternity. The whole conception of the frame of mind in which Antigone sets forth on her desperate errand, her love, her earnest faith and grasp of the Time beyond time, is as deeply thought out as it is beautiful.

We must now turn to the new ruler of Thebes, Kreon, the man with whom Antigone will have to do; but something of him we know already, for we have had a fore-glimpse of his mind in his dealings with the helpless Œdipus. Now the whole might of sovereignty is in his hands, for Thebes is supposed to be governed by a Tyrannos—not necessarily a bad man, a *tyrant* in the modern sense, but a ruler possessed of sole and despotic power. As Kreon himself puts it, he is the "steerer of the whole State"; as Tyrannos, he is unrestrained by any fetter save the right will, *eu-boulia*, which in a political sense may be interpreted as the disposition to be guided by good counsels and which the Greeks accounted so precious a treasure. It remains to be seen whether the new ruler possesses this.

Kreon himself lays great stress on right intentions. He had just made a long speech, setting forth his own before the elders of Thebes, his future counsellors, whom he has summoned to meet him.

He begins by enunciating a truth peculiarly true in the present instance, viz. that it is very hard to know any man, his mind and will and opinion, before he is entrusted with office and the guardianship of the laws. As for himself, his opinion, now that he is steerer of the whole State, is what it has always been (in his private life)—namely, that the man who does not hold fast to the best counsel, but closes his mouth through fear, is the worst of leaders. And further, that the man who sets his friends (his private relationships) before the fatherland, that man is to be counted as nothing.

These are the two principles, the holding fast to the best counsel and the subordination of private interests to those of the fatherland, by which Kreon means to raise the State. This policy also, he says, has guided him in his edict concerning the two sons of Œdipus. The patriot Eteocles, who fell in the defence of his fatherland, shall be buried with every sacred rite and honour due to the hero; but Polyneikes, the renegade, who sought to give the city up to fire and sword, shall be deprived of sepulture. He shall neither be mourned for nor buried. No! his dead body shall be seen, outraged, dishonoured, devoured by dogs and birds of prey. This, Kreon says, is his *phronēma*, his mind and will.

Kreon has undoubtedly spoken fluently. His intentions, moreover, on the surface, are just and upright, whilst the attitude which he has taken up, that of the defender of the city, punishing the man who would have destroyed it, yea, even when that man is his own near kinsman, is well calculated to win over the people who have suffered in the family feud.

Nevertheless, the representatives of the people do not receive the speech with much enthusiasm. They seem, rather, to feel with Œdipus (*Œd. Col.*, 806) that the man who "can *speak* well on every subject is never just." Kreon has just said that he holds him who does not abide by the best counsels (*bouleumata*) as the worst of leaders, and yet what counsel has he asked of them, the elders of the people, or of any one else?<sup>1</sup> It is evident that Kreon's *bouleumata*, his counsels, decisions, have been made in consultation with his own *phronēma* alone, his sole mind and will; and this is now leading him into

<sup>1</sup> *Bouleumata* are decisions arrived at after deliberation and counsel taken with others; especially is the word used of the decrees of a State Council.

a most unheard-of course. That Polyneikes, the traitor-prince, should be honoured with a public funeral is indeed not to be thought of; Antigone herself, the true patriot, would never have expected or desired this. But to punish the dead body, the vessel (as Plato would have put it) from which the spirit, the man himself, has fled, is not only a senseless proceeding, but sheer *hybris*, presumption, on the part of Kreon. Polyneikes is no longer subject to the jurisdiction of any mortal, and Kreon, by persistently sitting in judgment upon him, is usurping the functions of the powers beyond the grave. Nay, more—according to Greek notions, he is, as we have seen, detaining the spirit of Polyneikes from at once passing over to the place of the unseen judgment.

Some thought like this is evidently present to the mind of the Theban elders, for they prudently abstain from comment on the speech, beyond replying that Kreon it is who has now to make laws for the dead as for the living. That this reply is dictated rather by the desire to escape responsibility for such an edict than by obsequiousness is shown immediately; for when Kreon asks them to become guardians of the edict, they request him to lay this burden on younger shoulders. And the mind of the people is even more clearly expressed when, a few moments later, there appears in breathless terror a guard—one of those appointed to watch the corpse and prevent any attempt at burial—and announces that, despite their care, the deed has been done; the body has been sprinkled with earth, and the necessary sacred rites performed with due care by—he knows not whom. No trace of human handiwork is to be seen; the earth around has not been disturbed, nor is there track of wheels.

One of the elders thereupon exclaims: "May this not be indeed the work of God, O king? The thought hath long been in my mind."

"Desist!" rejoins Kreon furiously, "before the measure of my wrath is full, lest, old as thou art, thou be found a fool. What thou sayest is intolerable; as if the gods could have a care for such an one as that man lying there." And then, laying aside the thin veil of courtesy which hitherto he has used, Kreon proceeds to show the real mind of the tyrant in our sense of the word. The whole thing is a conspiracy against him. He has noticed, he says, symptoms of discontent in the city, murmuring and secret shaking of heads; the neck is not held submissively under the yoke. By this fashion—those who do not acquiesce in his rule—the guard, he opines, has been bought up, bribed to thwart him and do this deed. The love of money is at the root of the whole thing, as of all evil. And so on Kreon declaims, concluding finally with the threat, which he confirms by an appeal to Zeus, that if the guards do not disclose the perpetrator of the deed and bring him before his presence, death itself shall be too light a punishment for them—they shall hang, living, until they have disclosed this *hybris*.

We now know fully with what manner of man Antigone has to do. The guard and Kreon respectively retire, and there follows the grand and impressive choral ode, with which we are already acquainted,<sup>1</sup> upon the greatness and wondrous achievements of man—his power over nature, his inventiveness, his ability to follow with speech upon the track of thought, his state-craft, his wisdom. One thing alone has baffled man—he has no power over death.

The elders suddenly pause, for the guard appears again, this time leading a woman, whom, to their consternation, they perceive to be Antigone.

"Here is she who did the deed," exclaims the man; "in the very act we seized her. But where is Kreon?" The latter at the moment comes forth from the palace and to him the guard relates with much detail how the maiden had been captured.

<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, p. 129.



On returning from the presence of Kreon, his threat still ringing in his ears, the man and his fellows first carefully removed from the body all traces of the earth wherewith it had been so carefully shrouded, and then set themselves to watch. Suddenly a mighty storm arises, a tempest of wind which fills the air and compels the guards to close their eyes, but which some one utilises to renew the attempts at burial. The storm abates as suddenly as it had arisen, and Antigone is desecrated consecrating anew, with the threefold holy libation, the body which she has already besprinkled again with earth. The guards descend straightway and seize her; but "no whit terror-struck was she," is the comment. "We convicted her of the first attempt as well as of this repetition, and lo! calmly stood she there, nor ever denied it. All this," the man, with a true touch of nature, admits, "is joy as well as grief to me. For to escape evil oneself is sweetest, but to lead those whom one loves into evil, that is grievous indeed. Nevertheless, mine own safety was to me the first consideration."

It is evident that the watchman is secretly on Antigone's side, and that, but for the ferocious threat of Kreon, she would have escaped.

Kreon turns sternly to Antigone. "Thou, standing there with head bent to earth, say, dost thou deny that thou didst do this deed?"

"I say," replies the undaunted girl, "that I did it, and deny it not."

Kreon thereupon dismissed the man as free, and continues to Antigone: "Speak thou, but make thine answer short. The edict that forbade this deed—didst know of it?"

"I did; why not? It was openly proclaimed."

"And knowing, thou didst dare to overstep the laws?"

Then follows Antigone's noble stand for truth, the ever-living truth that something higher than the will or law of man exists.

"It was not Zeus that proclaimed me this," she says, "nor hath Justice, who dwelleth with the gods below, marked out for men such laws. Nor did I deem thy proclamation of such might as that it, the word of mortal man, could overpass the UNWRITTEN STEADFAST LAWS OF HEAVEN. For not of to-day are they—they live for ever; of their beginning knoweth no man. By these laws will I not bring myself to be condemned in judgment of the gods, through fearing the *phronēma*, the mind and will, of any man. That I must die—what then? I knew it well before thy proclamation, and if death take me hence before the time, that I consider gain. Why should it not be gain to one who lives, like me, encompassed by a thousand ills? This fate which has overtaken me hath for me no grief; but to behold *him*, born of my mother, lying in death unburied, that were indeed a grief. The other pains me not. If what I have done seems folly unto thee, then 'twill be a fool that names it folly."

Alas for Antigone! her passing thrust at Kreon, however true and well-deserved, has sealed her fate. As the Theban elders exclaim in their dismay, she is the true child of her father. She speaks out her thoughts without the slightest regard to the wisdom or un-wisdom of the proceeding from the point of view of worldly prudence. To hint that Kreon's judgment, the *phronēma* on which he prides himself, may be that of a "fool," is but to harden the fool in his folly. Antigone has done this, too, publicly before the elders of the people, and Kreon will never forgive it. Neither has he forgotten the humiliation of his defeat at Colonus, nor the well-merited denunciation of his conduct which came from the lips of Theseus on that occasion. In the memory of such an one as Kreon, headstrong and small-minded, such "injuries" live on and rankle deep.

Antigone has denounced his *phronēma*; but he will show her, he says, that her *phronēma*, her own too stubborn mind and will, must fall, even as the hardest iron, kept in the fire too long, proves the most brittle. He knows also that horses the most high-spirited are kept in check by a small bridle; not to one in the position of slave is it allowed to think high thoughts. She has been guilty of a double *hybris*, in that she first defied the laws, and then hath boasted of her crime and answered him with scorn. No longer will Kreon be the man—but *she* the man—if with impunity she now remain the victor. But—and even though she be his sister's child, nearest of kin to him of all whom Zeus protects beneath his roof—neither shall she, nor yet her sister, escape the worst of fates. And Kreon concludes a hot speech by bidding the attendants bring Ismene before him.

Antigone is alarmed for her sister. "Wilt thou have more than *my* death?" she asks.

"Not I," Kreon rejoins. "In *that* I have all, vengeance for bygone times included."

"Why then delay?" says Antigone. She knows full well that she will never satisfy him, nor he her. "And yet," she adds, "what could be said of me more glorious than this, that to rest I laid my brother, my own brother, in the grave? All these," she continues, pointing to the assembled elders, "would proclaim the deed well done, did not fear close their lips."

Kreon retorts by saying that she alone, of all the Kadmean folk, thinks thus. "And art thou not ashamed to think apart from them?"

"There is no shame in reverencing those we love."

Kreon tries to shake her resolution by the argument that in thus honouring Polyneikes she dishonours Eteocles—the one is her brother equally with the other. In showing *sebas* (reverence) to Polyneikes, the would-be destroyer of the land, she is showing *dys-sebeian* (impiety) to Eteocles, its shield and protector.

"So will not *he* judge who rests in death," rejoins Antigone quietly. . . . "Hades demands his rights for both."

"But not that the good shall have like portion with the evil."

"Who knoweth whether those below will hold these maxims holy?" demands Antigone—a reminder of the difference between God-given and man-expounded law.

Kreon is tired of the discussion. He ends it abruptly with the words: "Never, not even in death, can an enemy become a friend."

"*I was not born to hate*," says Antigone simply, "*but to love*," a noble rejoinder from the girl who had suffered so much in common with her father at the hands of Polyneikes.

"Go thou below," says Kreon, with a sneer. "If love thou must, love there. No woman, so long as *I* live, shall have dominion over me."

Ismene is then brought in—no longer, however, the timid, hesitating Ismene of the opening scene. Now that she sees Antigone standing there, alone in the high courage of her loyalty to truth, Ismene's faltering courage is quickened.<sup>1</sup> She flies to Antigone's side, has no thought or wish save that she may be allowed to die with her, and openly avows herself a sharer in the deed.

"Not so!" says Antigone. "Justice permits not this, seeing that Ismene was not willing that Kreon should be disobeyed." And then, repulsing her

<sup>1</sup> The constant effect of the witness to truth. Cf. St. Paul's declaration: "Many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear" (Phil. i. 14).



with what looks like hardness, she adds: "The friend who only loves in words I care not for."

But the hardness is easily explained by what passes between the sisters. "My death suffices," says Antigone. . . . "It is with grief that I do scorn thee, if scorn I must. . . . *Save thyself.*" Beneath the hard and scornful manner is the affectionate desire that not a shadow of suspicion shall fall upon Ismene in the eyes of the tyrant.

The generous strife between the sisters Kreon professes to regard as madness. "The one has lost her senses now," he says; "the other was mad from the beginning."

"What will life be to me alone, without her?" says Ismene, in a paroxysm of grief.

"Speak not again of *her*," rejoins Kreon sternly. "She is no more!"

"*Wilt thou slay thine own son's bride?*" demands Ismene, and the question falls like a thunderbolt upon all present. That Antigone, now condemned to death, is betrothed to Hæmon, the son of her judge, is a fact which, coming to light now for the first time, quickens in every breast the sense of the self-sacrifice of the noble girl. In attempting the burial (and, as she thinks, the salvation) of her brother, Antigone has literally given up every hope, every-thing that makes for earthly happiness. When she set out on her desperate enterprise, she knew that she was exchanging the joyous bridal hymn for the chambers of the dead. Even the pulse of the ancient elders beats more quickly as they echo Ismene's cry: "Thou wilt tear her from thine own son?"

"'Tis Hades stops the wedding," rejoins Kreon, a grim allusion to the zeal of Antigone in claiming the rights of Hades for both her brothers.

"Then," pursue the old men, "it seems determined that she shall die."

"For you and me, it is," says Kreon to the *counsellors* whose counsel is not asked. "No more delay!" and the helpless maidens are forthwith led within to be kept under closest guard. "Even the boldest will flee," comments Kreon, "when they see their life nearing the open gate of Hades."

Then follows another grand choral ode, in which the elders express the popular ideas concerning the house of Labdacus (father of Œdipus) and its attendant "curse." Like the stormy sea, tossed by the north wind, stirred to its depths, breaking wave after wave on the rocky coast—so does woe upon woe, the "curse" from generation to generation, break on the doomed house. And now the last roots of Œdipus, still standing in the sunlight, are about to be cut down by the blood-red sickle of the powers of death—the senselessness of speech and the Erinyes of the mind.

"O Zeus! who amongst men by overstepping the bounds can stay thy power?<sup>1</sup>—that power which neither sleep, the all-pursuer, hath ever overtaken, nor the unwearied moons. Through ageless time thou rulest in the radiant splendour of Olympus. In the hereafter, as in the past, this law holds good. In mortal life is nothing wholly free from sin and penalty (*atē*)."

Here the *atē*—*self-chosen* sin and its resulting woe—is synonymous with the senseless speech (*logōn anoia*) and the Erinyes of the mind alluded to above. Kreon has issued a "senseless" edict, wherein he has "overstepped" the unwritten law, and now the avenging Erinyes has taken possession of his mind, *i.e.* the same presumptuous self-will which dictated the edict now prevents his abandoning the position taken up. This attitude of mind the chorus calls an *apatē*, a punishment sent by heaven upon the former *atē*, and taking the form of self-delusion.

<sup>1</sup> By *hyper-basia*—overstepping of the bounds allotted to mortals.

"Evil appears good to the man whom God leadeth to destruction. But a short space, and ruin draweth nigh."

Is it the meaning of the poet here that God leads men to destruction? We trow not. The *apatē* is with Sophocles, as with Æschylus,<sup>1</sup> simply the wilful hardening of the heart which blinds a man and prevents his seeing whither he is going.

Hæmon now appears—a lover worthy of Antigone. Kreon's one redeeming point is his affection for his son, and he fears, not without reason, what may be passing in Hæmon's mind.

"My son," he says, "dost thou come in anger against thy father, knowing the sentence passed on thy betrothed? or dost thou love, despite what we (as ruler) do?"

Hæmon replies gravely: "I am thine, my father, and thou with *wisest* judgment shalt guide me. This (the best judgment) I will follow. No marriage could to me be of more worth than thy *wise* leading."

Kreon replies, well satisfied that his judgment and his leading are both of the wisest: "Thus must it be within thy heart, my son. To the judgments of thy father *all* must give place;" and he then proceeds to lay down more fully that doctrine of passive obedience which he had already hinted at in his speech to the elders of Thebes. The neck of children, as of subjects, must be held submissive to the yoke. He whom the State has appointed must be obeyed in all things—small and great, just and hard. There is no greater evil in State or home than *an-archia*, lawlessness; *peith-archia*, obedience, it is that serves the multitude. As for Antigone—what will a bad wife profit him? Let her go seek a husband in Hades! She alone of all the city hath defied him, and if Kreon would not appear false before the city, she must die. Let her appeal to Zeus, protector of blood ties! A man must rule his own house first, if he would rule the State. Good order must be defended. Quite true; but Kreon adds a touch which reveals only too plainly the narrowness of the base of his good order.

"Never must we be beaten by a woman. Better, if need be, to fall man before man, than to be called inferior to a woman!"

To this tirade Hæmon replies with admirable tact and calmness. He begins by reminding the tyrant that the gods have implanted in men (in human beings generally) the *phrenes* (feeling, mind, will, thinking faculty), of all possessions the highest. Far be it from him to deny that what his father has said is right, but—may not other opinions be also right? (Other men have also that highest of possessions, the *phrenes*.) It is not possible for his father to know the real opinions of others, for the man of the people is afraid to speak the word that may displease the ruler. But Hæmon has opportunity for hearing what is spoken in secret: "The whole city doth lament the maid—that she, of all women the most innocent, should die the worst of deaths for the most glorious of deeds. 'She who buried her dear brother, nor left him a prey to savage dogs and birds, is she not worthy of golden honours?' so runs the opinion of the citizens, passing secretly from mouth to mouth. My father," he continues earnestly, "there is to me than thy success no greater treasure. What higher joy can children have than the fair fame of their father? or what to a father be dearer than the happiness of his children? Bear not, then, within thee *one* only thought—that what *thou* sayest, that, and that alone, is right. For many an one—who deemed that he alone, of all men, had mind and eloquence and soul—unveiling his true self, hath been discovered *empty*. Even to wise men it bringeth no dishonour to learn, or to

<sup>1</sup> Compare the *apatē* of the Persian monarch in the *Persians* of Æschylus (see p. 367).



yield. The tree that bends beneath the rushing torrent saves its branches; that which resists is rooted up. The ship that still will keep her sail too tightly stretched against the wind—that ship must be o’erturned. Do thou, my father, yield—desist from this thine anger.”

Throughout this whole address Hæmon hints, not obscurely, that in issuing the edict on his own sole authority Kreon has overstepped another of the great unwritten laws—that one which, lying deep within the heart of man, takes longest to develop—namely, the right of *every* man to think, the right of *free thought* in the highest sense. Heaven, he says, has given to *men*—i.e. to men everywhere, not to one favoured individual alone—the *phrenes*, a term which, in poetical language, comprehends the whole thinking man—will, feeling, heart, and mind. Later, with the philosophers, the proud distinction conferred by “mind” was limited to *nous*—mind *per se*, pure intellect; and Plato insists, not once or twice only, that *nous* is a something appertaining to God and to but few men. With this distinction we need not quarrel; taken in the sense of “genius,” this limitation of *nous* is, of course, strictly true. Nevertheless, Plato, no less than his master Socrates, declares that there is another something, and that also a thinking something, which every man possesses, and this is included in the *phrenes*—the power, namely, of forming a moral judgment, of distinguishing right from wrong, justice from injustice. This innate power it is, as the Socrates of Plato points out, which constitutes the very basis of political freedom. Why do we allow men of no culture, he asks—the cobbler, the carpenter, and their fellows—to vote in the assembly (and there perhaps by their votes outweigh the decisions of the cultured)? Simply because each man, even the most unlettered, has this inalienable heritage, the birthright of man *quâ* man, the capacity for forming a moral judgment. In this process, not keenness of intellect alone is at work. Many elements, as everybody knows, are concerned in the formation of a judgment, and by far the most powerful and active of these are what we call the “natural” or “right” feelings, the intentions of the human heart, what the Greeks, with a deeper and truer perception, divined to be unwritten laws, so peremptory, so commanding is their voice within. These laws, as laws, were not only a force to be reckoned with, but a sure foundation to be relied upon, in antiquity as now. To this we have the testimony not only of the poets, but of such men as Pericles, as Thucydides, as Plato, as Aristotle.

The relation of ruler and ruled comes, like all human relationships, within the scope of the unwritten laws, and to no people did this particular law appeal with such force as to the Hellenes, for no people ever more clearly recognised the Divineness of order, or showed more of what we call a “law-abiding spirit.” Their language itself shows this; the universe to them was a *kosmos* or divinely *ordered* whole, in which each separate part performs its own function in subordination to the general well-being of every other part. Their myths tell the same story; the legend of the war between the Titans and the heavenly powers, adopted by the Athenians as specially theirs, is nothing more than an allegory of the conflict between the forces of order and of disorder. From the very first the Hellenes recognised, as we have said, the Divine right of order to reign in society as in nature. This was indisputably one of the unwritten laws to them. But they also recognised that other and no less Divine law, that the order must come from within, not be merely enforced from without. Heaven has given to every man the *phrenes*, the thinking power, and from this flows naturally the Divine right of self-government morally, with its political complement, the right of sharing in the making

of the State laws, which were to be obeyed by every member of the State, of fixing the penalty for their non-observance. From natural causes this law is latest of all in coming to full development, inasmuch as religiously and politically a people has to grow from childhood into manhood.

Now, returning to the text, we see that Kreon, by his *one-man* doctrine, has "overstepped" the law of the universality of the gift of the *phrenes*. The condition of society in the drama is, of course, supposed to be that of the heroic age; but, even in Homer, we see Agamemnon doing nothing without consulting his counsellors—old Nestor, Odysseus, Ajax, and the other princes—and the final decision is, in appearance at least, referred to the people, for they are called to the assembly.<sup>1</sup> Kreon himself says that he has been appointed by the State; but he takes a new view of his duties to the State—the people have chosen him, not to represent them in the maintenance of Divine order, but to supersede them! Because they have elected him, they are thenceforward humbly to hold their neck submissive to the yoke, patient as the soulless beast of burden,<sup>2</sup> and receive at his mouth the laws of God as he may choose to interpret them, the laws of the State as he may choose to make them. To resist this new doctrine is, he says, *an-archia*, lawlessness.

Not so, says Hæmon. Heaven has given to all men the *phrenes*, thinking power, and *therefore* the opinion of one man may not override the opinion of all others. He who makes the claim to the sole possession of mind, the sole right of speech, does but reveal his own emptiness.

By this noble argument, Hæmon, like Antigone, lifts the whole matter out of the narrow limits within which Kreon seeks to confine it. This is no question between the head of a household and one of its members whom the tyrant holds to occupy the position of a slave (*doulos*) therein, his own niece; neither is it the question, to which Kreon would insultingly reduce it, of a trial of strength between man as man and woman as woman.

Antigone, by her noble protest, has raised it to a far higher level; it is a question between the ruler and the ruler of rulers, him from whom in the olden time all rulers professed to derive their authority, him whose *themistes* they were bound to defend.<sup>3</sup>

And now Hæmon, in like manner, shows that it is also a question between ruler and ruled—between Kreon and those who have entrusted to him their own powers for one purpose only, the maintenance of Divine order.

To return, the elders, on the conclusion of Hæmon's speech, beg Kreon to give ear to his son—the son to listen to the father, "for both," they add, with due caution, "have spoken well."

So does not Kreon think. "Yea," he says, "so we that are old shall now learn wisdom from the young?"

Hæmon—Not if this be not just. If I be young, regard not time as more than deeds.

Kreon—Prithee, is this among the "deeds"—to show reverence to breakers of the law?

Hæmon—Never would I claim honour for the bad.

Kreon—And is not she attacked by this disease (of law-breaking)?

Hæmon—Thebes' united townfolk with one voice say, No.

Kreon—The townfolk, forsooth, shall teach *me* how to rule?

Hæmon—There spakest thou, my father, all too youthfully.

Kreon—For whom, in this land, do I bear rule, if not for myself?

<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, p. 275.

<sup>2</sup> This is the literal meaning of the term used by Kreon himself.

<sup>3</sup> See *ante*, "Homeric Age," p. 273.



*Hæmon*—That State is no State which belongeth to one man.

*Kreon*—Is not the State governed by its ruler?

*Hæmon*—Right nobly in a desert wouldst thou bear rule—alone.

*Kreon*—(to the elders)—'Twould seem he is in league with the woman.

*Hæmon*—Yea, if thou be the woman. 'Tis for thee I am concerned.

*Kreon*—O miscreant, wilt thou denounce (argue with)<sup>1</sup> thy father (*dia dikēs ienai*)?

*Hæmon*—I see thee erring in unjust ways (*ou dikaiā*).

*Kreon*—I err, because my right as ruler here to me is sacred?

*Hæmon*—No longer sacred, when thou treadest down the honour of the gods.

*Kreon*—O shameful state of mind—to be a woman's slave!

*Hæmon*—That worst of shames thou'lt never see in me.

*Kreon*—And yet for her alone are all thy words.

*Hæmon*—Yea, and for thee, and me, and the gods of death.

*Kreon*—Slave of a woman, prate not to me.

*Hæmon*—Thou'lt speak, it seems, but wilt hear naught.

*Kreon*—Think not that her thou'lt ever win alive as bride.

*Hæmon*—She dies then, and, dying, slays another.

*Kreon*—What! thou darest proceed to threats?

*Hæmon*—Where is the threat in speaking against an empty delusion?

The word "empty" recalls to Kreon's recollection Hæmon's former warning concerning the "wisdom" proved to be emptiness, and he loses his self-control: "Thou'lt teach me to thy cost, thou wisacre, thyself *empty* in thy wisdom."

"And wert thou not my father," rejoins Hæmon hotly, "I'd say thou wert not over wise."

"Verily!" retorts Kreon in a fury. "Now, by Olympus, not to thy joy, be well assured, shalt thou revile me. Bring forth the hateful girl! She shall die straightway, before the very eyes of her bridegroom, by his side!"

"That she shall never do—think it not!" responds Hæmon; "nor ever upon me shalt thou again set eyes. Rage, then, before thy submissive friends," and unable longer to battle with despair, Hæmon rushes from the spot.

The elders, in alarm, call the father's attention to his distracted demeanour.

Kreon is blind to all; the *apatē* is within him, the avenging Erinys. "Let him go," he replies grimly, "and ponder in his *wisdom* plans beyond the wit of man. They will not save the girl."

It then appears that the fate of Antigone is already sealed. Kreon has already arranged that she shall be taken to the desert, far from the haunts of man, and there immured, alive, in an underground vault within the rock; but so much bread is to be given her as shall preserve the State from the *agos*, i.e. the pollution of the death, and the *miasma* of blood-guilt. Mark the surface nature of the man. Deprived of light and air, Antigone must necessarily die, but the State is guiltless; it has provided her with the *means of life*. By such wretched quibbles Kreon, like many before and after him, thinks to outwit heaven. "There," in the rocky tomb, he says, "let her pray to Hades, the only god whom she reveres, that he will save her from this death. Or let her learn at last that 'tis but trouble thrown away to reverence the dead."

Kreon re-enters the palace, and Antigone is led forth by the guards. When the young girl appears, even the elders are moved from their apathy and their politic attitude. Opinions are divided amongst them, but some openly express their concern. "No longer can I keep from tears," says one;

<sup>1</sup> An Attic law term. Kreon evidently fears that Hæmon is about to demand an impartial inquiry before a court of law (such as the Areopagus of Athens, which is supposed to be in existence).

"this sight draws even me beyond the bounds of the law"—i.e. the law that no one shall lament the fate of the law-breaker.

With the natural yearning of her age and sex for sympathy, Antigone sees the partial reaction in her favour, and turns to the ancient men, the representatives of "justice" as of law in Thebes.

"See me, citizens of my fatherland!" she says, "going the last way, beholding for the last time the light of the sun. Hades, who wrappeth all in sleep, leads me, yet living, to the shore of Acheron, the river of Death. No hymenæa hath fallen to my lot, no hymn of joy hath been sung for me at bridal feast. Nay! but to Death I am wedded."

The well-disposed among the elders seek to console her, while cautiously framing their words to suit the ruling power.

"Yet to the home of the dead thou goest," they reply, "with honour and with praise, wasted by no disease, unharmed by the sword, living—a law unto thyself (*autonomos*), as no mortal before thee, thou descendest into the grave."

Antigone does not heed the phrase, "a law unto thyself." Absorbed in her grief, she can think of none whose fate resembles hers in its pathetic loneliness, save that of Niobe, bereft of all her children. Death, she says, will bring rest to her also.

"Niobe was Divine," say the sympathisers among the elders, "and of lineage Divine; we are but mortals, and of mortal birth. And yet, in death, to share the fate of gods—how great thy fame!"

The elder had spoken a true word, but Antigone has no thought of fame. "Ah me! he mocketh me!" she says, and turning from the representatives of the State before her to the ideal State, she calls upon the fatherland to bear witness to her fate—to say by what laws she hath been condemned, she who belongs now neither to the living nor the dead.

Others among the elders answer her (*Ant.*, 853–856, 872–875). She hath been over bold, they say; she hath defied the mighty throne of Justice; her protest is only a continuance of the struggle of her father's, her fate is *self-chosen*.

Antigone has now again to endure that bitterest of experiences—the conviction that she is misunderstood by all. She knows not of the noble stand made by her lover, nor that the city is stirred in her behalf. All that reaches her ears is that her fate is due to her own *orgē*—her own stubborn disposition; that her defence of truth is only a perverse continuing in the *athlon* of her ancestors; that her death is self-chosen (*autognōtos*). Be it so! the very consciousness that she stands alone gives strength for what remains.

Kreon appears, inquiring angrily into the cause of the delay; but neither he nor his myrmidons dare lay hands yet upon Antigone. She has a last word to say. Already she has borne witness to the central truth of life:—

"We ought to obey God rather than man. Whether it be right, in the sight of God, to hearken unto *you* more than unto God, judge ye."<sup>1</sup>

Now she has to give her testimony to a great truth concerning death. The full truth Antigone knows not, but of this one thing she is sure, that

"God is not the God of the dead, but of the *living*."<sup>2</sup>

"I am going to my own," she says, "and I have the strong hope that there I shall be dear to my father, dear to my mother, dear to thee, O brother." It is no eternal slumber in the house of Hades, the giver of rest, to which Antigone looks forward; but a joyful reunion with those for whom she has sacrificed all. She, who is here misunderstood and cast out, will there be dear and welcome to them. That she will be dear also to the gods the poor child does

<sup>1</sup> Acts v. 9, iv. 19.

<sup>2</sup> St. Matthew xxii. 32.



not venture to say. At the outset her faith was strong and clear—she must be “hot” in the task before her, she had said, not lukewarm, that she might please those whom most it concerned her to please—the Divine powers with whom she must spend eternity. And in thus speaking and acting she had obeyed the truest instinct of her heart. But now, like many another noble witness to truth,<sup>1</sup> Antigone is troubled. On all sides she is told that she is sinning against the gods. “And yet,” she asks, “against what decree of the immortals have I sinned? What availeth it that I, O miserable! should look unto the gods? to whom can I now cry for help—I to whom the fear of God is reckoned as impiety?”

But the cloud passes over. Antigone is content to leave the decision to the Invisible Justice. She will soon know the truth for herself—whether she or her earthly judge is in the right. “If,” she says, “these things (the doctrines of Kreon and his supporters) are pleasing to the gods, then we (I and my dear ones) will submit and acknowledge our fault. But and if these men are in the wrong, then may they endure no more than they, unjustly, do now inflict on me.”

Kreon now steps forward, threatening the guards with dire penalties if there is any further hesitation, and Antigone is hurried away, uttering the last appeal (*Ant.*, 937 *et seq.*): “O land of Thebes! city of my fathers! gods of my race! heads of Thebes’ State! behold what I must suffer, and of whom, because I *held sacred the Sacred!*”

But retribution is at hand. Teiresias, the seer, appears, and warns Kreon that his fate as ruler of Thebes is even now hanging in the balance. Heaven and earth are full of signs and portents ominous and threatening; the flame shineth not upon the altar, the air resounds with the discordant screeching and clamour of evil birds. The whole city is polluted—the gods will accept no sacrifice, for the altars are defiled by the dogs that have fed on the flesh of the unhappy son of Œdipus; the very birds give forth no joyous cry since they have drunk of the blood of the dead. “Thus suffereth the city,” says the seer, “because of *thy mind and will*. And now, my son,” he adds (*Ant.*, 1223 *et seq.*), “consider this—common it is to all men to err; but if sin hath been committed, that man is neither left without counsel (*a-boulos*) nor yet unblest who, when he hath fallen, seeketh health, and remaineth not stubborn. Self-will alone to folly is imputed. Yield thou! Stab not the dead. Where is the courage in slaying anew the slain?”

The counsel is given in the kindest way, but Kreon puts it from him. Omens and portents! he has a mind above such folly. “In the grave,” he says, “this man shall not be laid. Yea, and were the eagle of Zeus itself to feed upon his flesh and bear it to the throne on high, this would not move me. For well I know that no mortal can pollute the gods.”

True, but a mortal can pollute himself and the whole State.

“Then,” says the seer, “if any amongst men did but know, would but consider——” He pauses.

“What then?” says Kreon with a sneer; “what is this ‘common-to-all’ truth?”

“This, that the mightiest by far of all possessions is a right and well-advised will (*eu-boulia*).”

“Yea,” retorts Kreon, “as the worst by far of all evils is to be devoid of understanding.”

<sup>1</sup> John the Baptist out of prison bears noblest testimony to Christ; John the Baptist in prison sends the message to Him, “Art Thou the very Christ, He that should come, or look we for another?”

"The very evil wherewith thyself is filled," gravely rejoins the seer.

From three different sources Kreon has now heard it hinted, not obscurely, that his wisdom is not "wisdom"—from Antigone, in defence of the sacred rights of the human heart, the unwritten laws; from Hæmon, on behalf of the universal opinion of the citizens; finally from the seer, as representing the Invisible Justice. All three appeals he rejects, accusing the seer now of being bought with money—bribed against him—until the venerable man, his office thus held up to ridicule, is compelled to disclose to the tyrant the consequences of his obstinacy.

"Know this," he says, "that for thee the sun not oft shall run his course before that thou, from out thy very heart's blood, shall give forth a life for lives. Thou hast thrust down, dishonoured, to the realms below that which belongeth to the gods above, a living soul; and hast withheld from gods below the dead—without its due, without its share in funeral rites, unconsecrate—from them thou hast kept back by force that which appertaineth not to thee nor to the gods above. For this cause Hades, the destroyer, and the avenging Erinyes lie in wait for thee to seize thee in thine evil deeds."

The seer concludes with a terrible picture of what must shortly come to pass. Kreon has scoffed at his words; let him now look to himself and his own house for their fulfilment.

He departs, but not in vain has he spoken. Kreon begins to waver. Hæmon in his distraction rises before his eyes. "Out of thy very heart's blood thou shalt give life for lives." The elders remind him that, long as they have known the seer—before their dark locks turned white—never in all these years has a false word fallen from his lips.

"That I know," Kreon rejoins, "and my heart is troubled. To yield is terrible, but to resist with ruin (*atē*) drawing nigh!"

"Good counsel now is needed," say the ancient men.

"Say, then, what must be done—speak—I will follow," Kreon rejoins, his anxiety overmastering his pride.

"Release the maiden from the vault; give burial to the dead."

"This course thou recommendest—that I should *yield*?"

"As speedily as possible, O king, for heaven-sent judgments come quickly on the heels of folly."

With all this hesitation, as the elders perceive, precious time is being wasted, and once more they urge the tyrant to begin the work himself, nor depute it to others. At length Kreon, seeing that he "cannot fight against necessity," gives the necessary orders for the funeral pyre of Polyneikes, and vows that he will liberate Antigone. "I bound her," he says, "and I myself will set her free." But his heart misgives him, and he sets out with the words: "Alas! I fear that after all 'tis best to keep unto life's end the laws decreed."

What need to dwell upon the sequel? The whole conclusion of the drama must be read to do it justice. Kreon and his attendants find the poor mutilated remains of Polyneikes, and give them sacred burial. They hasten then to the desolate region, far from the haunts of men, where Antigone has been immured. As they approach the spot sounds of woe and lamentation fall upon their ears, and the agonised father recognises the voice of Hæmon. On looking down into the vault an awful scene meets the eye—Antigone, dead, suspended by her veil from the rock; Hæmon kneeling by her side, quite distraught.

Another than Kreon has "set free" Antigone, even Hades, to whom he wedded her. Unable to bear the awful gloom and solitude of the tomb to which, living, she has been consigned—unable to bear the pressure of the



thought that she is forsaken by all—Antigone, true daughter of her father, has taken her "fate" into her own hands, and, like *Œdipus*, outrun God.

Do we blame her? Nay, Antigone has but been true to the ethics of her age. "Nobly to live or nobly to die befits the noble." The one seems to be denied her now; the other is within her reach. Antigone is no Christian heroine. Tried by the standard of her age, she has lived a heroic life and died a heroic death.

What need to dwell upon the fate of Kreon? Before his very eyes, from out his very heart's blood, the father sees "life" exchanged "for lives"—*Hæmon* plunges his sword into his breast, and dies with his beloved. Kreon returns to the city, bearing the lifeless body of his son, and is met by the intelligence that *Eurydike*, his wife, is no more. Unable to bear the agony of life without her son, she too has ended her mortal existence, and Kreon utters the heartrending confession that by *his own dys-boulie, his own perversities*, his house is left unto him desolate (*Œd. Tyr.*, 863 *et seq.*).

"Ah! were it the lot of my life to keep in sacred purity each word and work, true to the laws set forth on high! For they are born in heaven—Olympus alone is their sire—neither hath mortal nature conceived them, nor ever hath forgetfulness lulled them into slumber. No! for in them is a mighty God, and He groweth not old."

"Alas! I fear 'tis best to keep unto life's end the laws decreed."

## THE IDEALS OF SOPHOCLES

(1) **Loyalty to Truth.**—Among those for whom Sophocles wrote, belief in the seer, as in omens and portents, had almost entirely ceased; faith in the Oracle was rapidly passing away. Since his day the whole outward apparatus of religion—that of the chosen people as that of the seekers after truth among the nations—has changed; yet the inner meaning of the poet's teaching remains the same, for our day as for his.

The eternal verities which he proclaimed change not, the great unwritten laws still stand fast, man's "fate" still depends on their observance.

Human nature also is what it ever was. "Common it is to men to fail." Ajax with his *ego* is still among us, *Hercules* with his hidden, consuming Nessus-robe, *Œdipus* in his hot-headed impetuosity, *Polyneikes* and *Eteocles* in their self-seeking, Kreon in the obstinacy of his one-man doctrine; but also, thanks be to God! Antigone in her loyalty to truth, her spirit of unselfish love. In her, his noblest ideal, the poet would show the noblest side of human nature; but he does more than this, for in her he shadows forth all unconsciously to himself the image of Him who gathers up into Himself all noble ideals.

The conception of the intrepid girl who stands before the council and the ruler of her people, and utters the courageous words regarding a hollow, man-made law (*Ant.*, 450 *et seq.*): "'Twas not God that proclaimed me this, nor hath justice marked out such laws for men. Nor did I deem thy proclamation of such might as that it, the word of mortal man, could overpass the unwritten steadfast laws of heaven"—the conception of one who knows that she must be "hot," yea, hot unto death, in the service of those Divine powers with whom she must be for ever (*Ant.*, 89, 74)—of one who has no argument to oppose to taunts save this (*Ant.*, 523): "Not to hate was I born, but to love," and who seals her testimony by her death, who dies because she "held sacred the Sacred"—may well stand forth

as a glorious instance of the "seeking after God" which resulted in a firm foregrasp of the truth. In the *Antigone* of Sophocles we see, as in a glass darkly, Him who also stood before the ruler of His people and spake the significant words:—

"To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth."<sup>1</sup>

HIM of whom it was written: "The zeal of Thine house hath eaten me up."<sup>2</sup>

HIM who by His life and death was in Himself the revelation of the truth that "God is love."<sup>3</sup>

True, the *Antigone* of Sophocles—Christ-type as she undoubtedly is—is not altogether Christ-like. *Antigone* is no meek lamb led to the slaughter, blessing and forgiving her murderers. No! she is simply a noble, high-spirited Hellenic maiden, with all the faults as well as all the virtues of the heroic age. Does this destroy the value of the Sophoclean witness to truth? We trow not. In Sophocles, more perhaps than in any other writer, we see what Plato intended to convey when he said that God taketh away the mind of poets in order that we may know that HE is speaking to us through them—using them as instruments.

(2) **Generosity.**—With all his faults *Œdipus* stands out as the ideal of generous activity. "To help, so far as means and strength allow, this is man's noblest duty" (*Œd. Tyr.*, 314).

Theseus of Athens again presents us with another and a similar conception in his generous defence of the suppliants admitted to his care (*Œd. Col.*, 1040): "Trust me, *Œdipus*. Unless I die beforehand, I will not rest until I have restored thy children to thy keeping"; in his view of life (*Œd. Col.*, 567): "I know that I am a man," and its practical application (*Œd. Col.*, 1153): "*Nothing that touches man may be despised*," no less than in the genuine ring of his philanthropy (*Œd. Col.*, 1143): "Not with words would I bestir myself to make my life shine forth, but *with deeds*."

Finally, by the side of *Œdipus* and Theseus must be placed the noble *Odysseus* of the *Ajax*. He withstands the subtle temptation of Athena: "Is it not sweet to mock at foes?" by the simple declaration: "*I pity him*." And again, he opposes the contemptible resistance of Menelaus and Agamemnon to the burial of the fallen hero with the words: "He was mine adversary, but a noble man"—a sentiment that draws forth from Agamemnon the astonished exclamation (*Ajax*, 1355): "Thou wilt show reverence to thine *enemy* in death?" which again elicits in its turn the noble response: "Far over enmity triumphs in me his excellence"—the memory of his *aretē*.

*Odysseus*, like Theseus, realises that he is mortal. This realisation it is that prevents his mocking at a fallen foe; this leads him to insist on reverent burial for him. *Ajax* must be laid with honour in the grave, he says (*Ajax*, 1365), "*for I myself go thither*."

(3) **Family Love.**—It may seem strange at first to include the maintenance of the family in its integrity among the ideals of Sophocles; and yet no one can read the dramas of the master without being struck by the large place which family affection and the ties of blood hold in his esteem. In this respect he reminds us of Homer. Homer has his Penelope, Sophocles his Deianeira; Homer has his Hector and Andromache, Sophocles his Hæmon and *Antigone*; Homer has Laertes and his son, Sophocles *Œdipus* and his daughters; Homer, again, has his faithless wife, his Helen, bringing ruin in her wake—Sophocles, his faithless husband, Heracles, scattering destruction and desolation broadcast.

<sup>1</sup> St. John xviii. 37.

<sup>2</sup> Psalm lxi. 9; St. John ii. 17.

<sup>3</sup> St. John iv. 8.



To dwell on this theme would be simply to reproduce great part of the seven dramas. We must content ourselves therefore with the hope that the reader will trace out this characteristic of the master in his own pages. No more beautiful picture of the power of family love has ever been drawn than that of the blind *Œdipus*—cast out by the world—finding solace first in his home life, then, when cast out from his home, in his little maidens—his “double staff,” his “eyes.” Nothing more touching can be imagined than the old man’s joy when they are brought back to him by Theseus. Who cannot sympathise with his pitiful cry when he hears once more their voices (*Œd. Col.*, 1105): “Let me feel you, my children”? Not till he clasps them in his arms can he venture to believe that his treasures are indeed restored to him. “Now,” he says (*Œd. Col.*, 1110), “I hold my dear ones. While *they* stand by, death itself cannot be all-miserable!”

## § X.—EURIPIDES

### I.—LIFE AND WORKS

EURIPIDES, the third, and in some respects the greatest, of the great Athenian dramatists, first saw the light on the fateful day which witnessed the defeat of the Persian fleet at Salamis (480 B.C.). He was born on the island, where his family, in common with the rest of the Athenians, had taken refuge on the approach of Xerxes.

Not much is known concerning his parents. Aristophanes, indeed, is never tired of hinting that the origin of Euripides was worse than obscure; but that his father was probably of noble blood, and certainly fairly prosperous, is evidenced by several attendant circumstances. The boy, for instance, received a liberal education, and studied under a master who, as is well known, selected his disciples and exacted large fees.

His father is said to have received an oracle which predicted that his son should one day be crowned with garlands; and, interpreting this in the ordinary way, he had him carefully trained in gymnastic exercises. At an early age, however, Euripides showed that the crown of the athlete was not the one at which he aimed, for although he gained, when only seventeen, two prizes at the Eleusinian and Thesean games, he seems to have devoted himself immediately afterwards to the pursuits which were making his native city famous. With all the ardour of his nature he threw himself into the study of painting, rhetoric, and philosophy, attending the lectures, not only (as we have hinted) of the sophist Prodicus, but of the philosopher Anaxagoras.

The outcome of the influences at work upon him was a tragedy composed in his eighteenth year; but he did not exhibit publicly until 455 B.C., when he was twenty-five years of age. These seven years we may well suppose to have been years of mental growth, and to them probably are due the many passages of deep meaning which we find scattered throughout the plays of the "philosopher-poet."

From the performance of the *Peliades* (now lost) in 455 B.C., Euripides continued to exhibit regularly—his dramas reaching the enormous total of seventy-five, or, as some say, ninety-two—until the year 408, when, from some cause not actually known, but easily conjectured, he left Athens and retired to the court of Archelaus, king of Macedon, by whom he was warmly received. Here, two years later, at the age of seventy-five, he died.

Next to the father of poetry, Homer himself, there can be little doubt that Euripides was the most beloved of all Hellenic poets—not indeed by his own contemporaries in Athens, for which in many respects he was too advanced, but later. This is proved by the fact that no fewer than eighteen of his dramas—more than double the number of the extant tragedies of Æschylus or of Sophocles—have come down to us, whilst the fragments of the lost plays which have been preserved as quotations in the works of other writers fill of themselves a goodly volume.

To enter here upon any appreciation of Euripides as a poet would be to overstep our bounds, inasmuch as we are concerned with him only in connec-



tion with the development of the religious and moral idea. Nevertheless, whilst in pursuance of our plan we do our best to ensure that this great maker of Hellas shall be allowed to speak for himself on these greatest of all topics, we shall thereby enable the reader to form a more just and true estimate of the man than could be arrived at by any mere process of literary criticism. On two points only we must needs say a few words before passing on to our subject proper. These are—firstly, Euripides in his character as a philosopher, and secondly, the apparent moral contradictions to be met with in his works.

**Euripides as a Philosopher.**—It is hardly necessary to point out that the very feature which, in many instances, detracts from the artistic beauty of the works of Euripides enhances their value to us in our present inquiry. The philosophical and moral reflections in which our poet delights are, it is true, often absurdly out of place in the mouth of the particular hero or heroine to whom they are assigned. Nevertheless, such passages are of exceeding worth to us; some of them as affording a glimpse into the real mind of Euripides himself, and all as depicting vividly the life of the Athens of his day in its wondrous many-sidedness. The religious questions stirred up by Xenophanes and other thinkers, the doubts cast upon traditional beliefs and the Divine origin of the myths, the quickening of attention as to the descriptions of the character of the gods given by the poets, the materialistic tendencies of the age, the origin of evil, the morality taught by the sophists, the new manner of life recommended by the philosophers, the merits of the rival polities and forms of government now on their trial in the different States of Greece, the status of women, the value of education, the position of the slave—contemporary thought on all these questions, and others which will meet us in the course of our inquiry, is reflected in the pages of Euripides as in a mirror.

Before all things, therefore, in the study of Euripides, it is necessary to bear in mind that in him we have to do not only with the contemporary and rival of Sophocles, but with the contemporary and friend of Socrates. In point of time he stands midway between the two, for he was ten years younger than Sophocles and thirteen years older than Socrates.

**His apparent Moral Contradictions.**—No writer has suffered more than Euripides from a practice only too common in all ages—that, namely, of giving extracts from an author without regard to the context in which they occur—a practice to which the brilliant epigrammatic sayings of our poet lent themselves only too easily. In this respect Euripides was cruelly treated by Aristophanes, who persistently held him up to public execration on the strength of isolated “texts,” which in reality only receive their proper explanation when taken in connection with the whole tenor of the drama in which they occur. An instance in point is the famous line uttered by Hippolytus in the tragedy which bears his name (*Hipp.*, 612): “The *tongue* hath sworn, but the *heart* knows nothing of it.” This was twisted by the enemies of the poet into a sanction of perjury and an attack upon the sanctity of the oath; whereas (as we shall presently see in our examination of the drama) the man who has been duped and forced by circumstances, the conflict of rival duties, to make the remark, dies rather than break the oath to which he refers.

In order, therefore, that we may not ourselves fall into the error which we have just condemned, we propose to confine our examination entirely to those works of the poet which are before us in their entirety, and to bring forward no “text” which cannot be considered in connection with the story in which it occurs, or which we have not compared with other utterances of Euripides

bearing on the same subject. This method will debar us from making use of the fragments of the lost tragedies, but it has the great advantage of fairness and of enabling us to build up our knowledge of Euripides on a solid foundation. What we wish to arrive at is not what "they say" about Euripides, however great may be the authority of the critics, but what the master himself says.

The nineteen extant dramas attributed to Euripides may be grouped together as under:—

(1) Nine based on the TROJAN EPIC CYCLE:—

(a) Four following the fortunes of Agamemnon and his family—*Iphigenia in Aulis*, *Iphigenia in Tauris*, *Orestes*, and *Electra*;

(b) Three those of the wife and family of Priam—*The Trojan Captives*, *Hecabē*, and *Andromache*;

(c) One devoted to another version of the story of Helen—*Helena*;

(d) One dealing with an incident in the wanderings of Odysseus—*The Cyclops*, the only existing specimen of the satyric drama.

(2) Two treating of incidents connected with the THEBAN EPIC CYCLE—*The Phœnician Women* and the *Suppliants*.

(3) Two relating to Heracles and his family—*The Mad Heracles* (*Hercules Furens*) and the *Children of Heracles*.

(4) Two dealing with the jealousy of the gods—*Hippolytus* and the *Bacchantes*.

(5) Three taking up incidents linked with other sagas:—

(a) *Medeia*, based on the finale of the Thessalian story of Jason and his voyage in the *Argo* in quest of the Golden Fleece;

(b) *Alcestitis*, on two other Thessalian legends connected with Apollo and Heracles;

(c) *Ion*, on the legendary history of the founder of the Ionian race.

(6) *Rhesus*, the nineteenth drama, founded on an episode in the *Iliad*, is regarded with suspicion by some critics as not a genuine work of the poet, and will therefore not be included in our scheme.

## II.—THE IDEA OF GOD

### INTRODUCTION

Many of the apparent contradictions to which we have just referred in the writings of Euripides occur in the diverse views which his pages present concerning the gods. There are not a few passages in our poet which might seem to warrant the supposition that he had no belief whatever, whilst, on the other hand, we meet with sentiments of the most opposite character. How are these differences to be reconciled? In two ways:—

(1) By treating Euripides as we would treat any other great master of his art. To this standard of artistic fitness Euripides himself appealed, for he is said to have declared that he was ready to defend the matter introduced into his dramas before the *theatrical judges*—that is, before persons conversant with the requirements of the dramatic art—but not before any other tribunal.

In order, then, to understand aright his utterances regarding the gods, we must, as before pointed out, pay heed to the context—we must look at the "utterance" in the light of the character and circumstances of the person who utters it. For instance, when Clytemnestra says to Achilles in the *Iphigenia in Aulis* (1034): "If there are gods, thou, being a just man, wilt



receive the reward of the good ; but if *not*, why need we trouble ourselves ? ” we must bear in mind that the speaker is a mother who has just discovered that she has been most cruelly deceived, and that the deceit has been practised upon her in order to carry out a command which is announced by Calchas the seer as Divine, but which *she* believes to be a fiction, viz. that her child must be offered up in sacrifice to the goddess Artemis. Under these circumstances, Clytemnestra may well be excused the outburst. From her lips it is perfectly natural.

Again, what are we to make of such a passage as the following ?—

“ Wealth, my little man, wealth is the god of the wise. All the other gods are but empty boasts and pretty fancies born of words. I do not tremble at the thunder of Zeus, nor do I know that Zeus is any whit a greater god than myself. . . . Mother Earth (herself a goddess) is compelled, whether she will or no, to bring forth grass to fatten *my* beasts. I sacrifice to no god except myself and the greatest of all gods—my stomach. To eat and drink every day to the full, and to torment oneself about nothing, that, to the wise among men, *that* is Zeus ! As for those who have made the laws, tricking them out with fine words, for the life of men, I bid them—go hang ! ”

What significance is to be attached to such words as these ? We turn to the context, and find that Euripides puts them into the mouth of the Cyclops in the satyric drama of the same name—into the mouth, that is, of the embodiment of ignorance, unrule and savageness. We have in the whole passage (*Cyclops*, 315–16, 320, 331–40), beyond a doubt, a most trenchant comment on the materialistic tendencies of the day, an echo of sentiments which our poet must have heard often enough expressed, and of which he shows his due appreciation by allowing them to proceed from the lips of such a being as the Cyclops, a creature more animal than man. In no more significant way could the poet express his own opinion of those “ whose god is their belly, who mind earthly things,” who say “ Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.”

(2) We must recollect that the age of Euripides is an age of transition and of extremely rapid transition. He himself, as we have pointed out, stands between the old traditional faith and the new light of philosophy. Euripides, on the one hand, has broken with the mythical gods, but he has not attained to clearness of vision. As the disciple of Anaxagoras, he believes that God is spirit, but the further definition of what that SPIRIT is, is lacking. Euripides does not tell us much of what God *is*, but in no uncertain words he tells us what God is *not*. Thus we go forward with him one stage only in the great journey. This is perfectly in accordance with the orderly, settled lines on which the evolution of the religious idea proceeded in Greece. Æschylus showed to his countrymen the Divine Justice at work in the universe ; Sophocles, the action of the Divine Justice in the great social laws ; Euripides proceeds to develop the same grand theme when he bids his fellow-men note that the Divine Justice could not possibly emanate from such a source as the fallible, often polluted beings called “ gods ” in the myths. Euripides is an iconoclast, breaking into pieces the idols before which his countrymen worshipped, but he is no atheist. Far from that, he is simply accomplishing, to a certain extent consciously, the world-task to which he was called. By clearing away the rubbish that had accumulated for centuries around and above the old traditions, and leading his hearers to *think*, Euripides is preparing the ground for the good seed of a Socrates and a Plato. There is no break in the continuity of development—each instrument makes ready the way for the rest.

Euripides’ work as an iconoclast will, perhaps, best be seen in a concrete

illustration. We shall therefore proceed to examine briefly in its entirety (so far as it concerns our purpose) his treatment of one of the most popular of the national legends—the story of Ion.

**The Story of Ion.**—In the drama entitled *Ion*, Euripides handles the mythical history of the founder of the Ionian race. To understand his story aright, we must take a brief glance at that of the family from which he springs, the *Erechtheidæ*.

(1) Erichthonius, the founder of the family, is the representative of the “autochthonous,” earth-born Athenians. He springs directly from the soil of Attica in the form of a serpent, and is, according to one of the oldest sagas, the son of Hephæstus and Gæa. As soon as he is born he becomes the protégé of Athena, goddess of the land, who entrusts him, enclosed in a chest, to the care of the three daughters of Cecrops, king of Athens—Aglaurus, Pandrosus, and Hersê—with strict injunctions to bring him up “without looking at him.” Moved by curiosity, however, two of them, Aglaurus and Hersê, open the box, and struck by horror at the sight which meets their gaze, the serpent-bodied infant, they lose their wits and throw themselves over the Acropolis-rock.

Here we have clearly a very ancient nature parable. Athena, in the earliest cult of Attica, is the goddess of agriculture. Erichthonius, her protégé, is the child of Hephæstus and Gæa—that is, of Warmth and Mother Earth. His name is held to betoken the blessings of the earth, and he himself, with his serpent-body enclosed in a chest, is the long, twisting, straggling shoot springing upwards from the seed in which it has been encased.<sup>1</sup> The lid of the chest is opened contrary to their instructions by two of the sisters to whom the child has been entrusted. The seed, that is, germinates prematurely through too favourable atmospheric conditions; for the three sisters—Aglaurus, Pandrosus, and Hersê—are, as their names denote, embodiments of the sunny air, the rain, and the dew, which nourish “without looking” at their charge, *i.e.* through the dark earth that conceals the seed from view.

(2) In due course Erichthonius begets a son, Erechtheus, who is finally engulfed in a chasm of the earth by Poseidon, god of the sea, probably the mythical way of putting the fact that sea-water is inimical to vegetation.<sup>2</sup>

(3) To the third generation belongs Creusa, the daughter of this Erechtheus, and grand-daughter of Erichthonius, the original earth-man. Hers is a tragical fate, for against her will she is forced to become one of the many brides of the sun-god, Apollo, who surprises her in a lonely grotto under the Acropolis-rock and compels her to yield to his embraces.

The germ of this story, again, is evidently the simple and beautiful fact that, given the necessary conditions—a seed, a little earth, and a chink through which the sunbeams can penetrate—even there a plant will not only grow, but blossom and fructify *against its will*, *i.e.* against the natural darkness of its habitat. Possibly the story grew out of the surprise felt by some ancient poet, or myth-maker, at finding a tender plant blossoming in such a place. “Evidently,” he muses, “one sought out and beloved of the sun-god.” Hence the myth.

(4) Following the history to the fourth generation, we arrive at Ion, the

<sup>1</sup> Erichthonius is always represented as a serpent. His “double,” Cecrops, however, possesses from the waist upwards the form of a man, whilst the lower part of his body is that of a serpent. The description of Cecrops, therefore, is a better version of the parable: for he has the “upward-looking” part which seeks the light, the shoot; and the part which creeps beneath the earth, the fibrous, serpent-like roots.

<sup>2</sup> Of course, there are other ways of interpreting the Attic legends. For the historical mode, which makes Poseidon the representative of the sea-rovers who invaded the land and overcame the old Pelasgian population, see *ante*, p. 154.



hero of the drama, fruit of the union, who, as soon as born, is placed by Creusa in a "round-shaped casket," "after the family custom of the Erechtheidæ," and left to die. Apollo, however, unknown to her, has the child transported by Hermes, his brother, to Delphi, his own domain, where it is taken care of and brought up to manhood.

The explanation of this is palpable enough. The child which is enclosed, "after the family custom," in the "round-shaped casket," exposed by the mother, carried away by Hermes, and brought to maturity in his own domain by Apollo, is the seed separated from the mother plant and carried by the winds<sup>1</sup> to a more favourable locality, where it develops and ripens in the rays of the sun, becoming in its turn the founder or progenitor of a new race.

Turn the actors in the little drama, however, into human beings—personify them, and we have at once a full-grown legend belonging to the class of myths which were, at one and the same time, the most shocking to the later Hellenic conscience and the most difficult to combat or repudiate. Needless to say, no suspicion of the connection between their national traditions and the plant-world ever entered the mind of the Greek of the classical age. This legend and the many similar stories met with in the myths were regarded simply as historical facts. The story of Ion, therefore, had to be very gently handled, for the Athenians were proud of their ancestral hero, and disposed to glory in the fact that his mother, an Athenian princess, had been thought worthy of the love of Apollo, the great god of Delphi, who himself became to them in this very connection Apollo Patrōos, the patron-god of the whole Ionian race.

How then does Euripides treat the subject? Does he surmise aught as to its origin—the little idyll of the plant and the sunbeam? We trow not.<sup>2</sup> The misery of the unhappy girl, and her overwhelming sense of shame and resentment against the "forced marriage," are to the poet realities which he not only hints at but boldly proclaims and denounces. In his opinion, at least, Creusa is not "honoured" by the "dishonour" thrust upon her.<sup>3</sup>

To return to the story: Apollo adds yet this other cruelty to his baseness, that he forbids his victim to make known to her father what has happened. Consequently, when her child is born, Creusa has no alternative but to expose it to die, in accordance with the savage custom of the age. She therefore places it in the usual cradle of the Erechtheidæ, the round-shaped box which we already know, deposits it in the grotto which has been the scene of her disaster, and so leaves the babe to its fate—as she imagines, death. The box and its contents are, however, brought by Hermes, in accordance with Apollo's directions, to Delphi, and placed at the entrance to the temple, where his prophetess, the Pythia, finds the forlorn infant, compassionately takes it into the temple, and brings it up, without, however, knowing anything concerning its parentage.

The child is the future Ion, who grows up in the temple, and when arrived at manhood is made by the Delphians custodian of the treasures of the god.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Hermes as the wind-god* in our companion volume, p. 161.

<sup>2</sup> There is one feature in the story as told by Euripides which might lead us to suppose at first sight that the poet had an inkling of the origin of the myth. When Creusa, namely, is visited by Apollo, "with his shining golden locks streaming" behind him (the streaming sunbeams), she has just been plucking crocuses wherewith to adorn herself. This touch is, however, in all probability borrowed from the old Homeric hymn to Demeter; for, in the scene in which Corē is carried off by Hades, the maiden is represented as in the act of gathering flowers. Corē, however, has plucked the hyacinth, the symbol of death, whereas Creusa holds the crocus, emblem of the spring-time, of life and youth.

<sup>3</sup> See especially the well-known passage, *Ion*, 283-9; the outburst of Creusa, 252-4; and the wonderful lines, "O my soul, how shall I keep silence?" 859 *et seq.*

He continues to lead what is described as a holy life (*semnon bion*), devoting himself to the service of Apollo, whose "slave" he delights to call himself, and to whom he gives the honoured name of father, in token of his gratitude, for of his real relationship to Apollo he has not the remotest idea. Ion is evidently Euripides' ideal of a pure and innocent youth, brought up, like his Achilles, far from the conventionalities and the follies of human society. He passes his days in the discharge of various functions, beautifully described by the youth himself at the opening of the drama. Thus, he superintends the attendants, whom he exhorts to come to their duties in the temple, bathed in the silver eddies of the Castalian spring, glittering with its pure dew-drops, and having, too, a good word, a tongue of good import, for the strangers who come to consult the Oracle. His own duties consist in chasing away with the bow the birds which swoop down from the heights of Parnassus and defile the consecrated offerings; in sprinkling the entrance to the temple with holy water; and in cleansing with laurel and myrtle twigs "from the immortal gardens" (the grove of Apollo) the altar and sacred precincts. In all his work Ion takes the greatest pride and delight. "O Pæan! Pæan!" he sings (*Ion*, 125 *et seq.*), "mayest thou ever be blessed, thou glorious son of Leto! Noble is the toil which falls to me before thy house, whilst I honour the seat of thine Oracle. Yea, famous is my toil, for with my hands I help the gods—not mortals do I serve, but immortals; in these blessed labours never will I weary. Phœbus is my father, my nourisher, whom I praise; to him in his temple I give the honoured name of father. Thus without ceasing may I ever serve Phœbus, or, if I cease, may it be to a blessed fate (*agathâ moirâ*, i.e. death)."

Thus, in his Ion, Euripides portrays a youth full of faith in the god, loving him with all the ardour of a grateful heart, and feeling himself ennobled and honoured by being allowed to perform the humblest offices in the sanctuary.

Imagine now the effect upon such an one of a revelation of the character of the god as shown in his relation to Creusa. This revelation is made to him by Creusa herself. The Athenian princess has been given in marriage to the Æolian Xuthos as a reward to the latter for services rendered in war. The union proves childless, and the royal couple set out for Delphi to consult the Oracle on the subject. Creusa arrives before her husband, for she has a private question of her own to put to the god, her betrayer, viz. what has become of the fruit of her union with himself? This question she confides to Ion (whose duty it is to receive and assist strangers on their arrival), little thinking that she is telling the secret to her own son. Throughout, however, she puts the case as that of a friend, in whose sufferings, through the betrayal and abandonment by Apollo, she takes the deepest interest.

Ion is terribly distressed by the story. He cannot at first believe it; the tale, he says, has been concocted by some one "who has suffered a wrong at the hands of a *man*." That a *god*, and that god the one to whom he is devoted, should have so acted, is to him incredible.

Something in Creusa's manner, notwithstanding, forces upon him the conviction that she is speaking truth, but he absolutely refuses to assist her in bringing so disgraceful a matter before the Oracle. "How," he says, "can she force the god to declare that which he wishes kept secret? Will he not rather visit those who dare to make it known in his own house with his displeasure?"

Creusa feels the truth of this—she is forced to keep silence; and, her husband arriving at the moment, they go to make inquiry at the shrine regarding their present childless lot, leaving Ion utterly at a loss to fathom the mystery. He tries to resume his wonted avocations, the peaceful duties in



which he has taken such pleasure, but the real tenor of his thoughts, the outcome of Creusa's communication, finally shows itself in the following outspoken words (*Ion*, 436 *et seq.*): "Phœbus must be warned by me of what he is doing, wedding maidens by force, and then betraying them, leaving the children whom he has begotten carelessly to die! Not *thou*, at least (O Phœbus!), but since the power is thine, follow after virtue. For whosoever among the children of men hath an evil nature, him the gods punish. How then can ye with justice prescribe laws for mortals when ye yourselves are found guilty of lawlessness? Suppose—the case, indeed, can never happen, but just let me suppose—that ye were to give satisfaction to men for such acts of violence, thou and Poseidon, and Zeus who ruleth on high, ye would empty your temples in paying the penalties of unrighteousness. For, in following pleasures rather than wisdom, ye do wrong. No longer with justice can men be called 'evil,' if they imitate the evil doings of the gods—that name belongeth to the teachers."

Bold words these, but true. The gods are now, in the misunderstood teaching of the ancient myths, the "evil" ones, teachers of iniquity; and in another of his dramas, the *Hippolytus*, Euripides shows this teaching in actual operation in the character of Phædra, who is led to consent to evil counsels by the sophistical argument: "*Wilt thou be wiser than the gods?*"

To return to the *Ion*: Apollo, of course, is finally cleared of the guilt of having abandoned his offspring, but it requires the intervention of Athena, the patron-goddess of his native city, to convince Ion that his mother's story is true. What Euripides himself thinks of the legend which he handles with so much fine feeling is, perhaps, best shown in the *motif* which brings Athena to Delphi. Apollo, she says (*Ion*, 1556 *et seq.*), was reluctant to appear before their eyes, "lest he should be reproached for the past," and had for this reason deputed her to reveal the truth. In other words, Apollo, by his non-appearance, tacitly confesses both that he has sinned and that he is ashamed of it.

To the Athenian many, perhaps, the teaching of the *Ion* would seem to be that the end justifies the means—the establishing of the Ionian race in Europe and Asia through a founder of Divine descent would atone in their view for a multitude of sins. In the ears of the thinking few, however—and especially of the few who were possessed by that inborn, God-implanted longing to claim kinship with the Divine which we have seen in men like Pindar—the words put into the mouth of Ion would re-echo until they demanded an answer. The *gods* the teachers of iniquity—can such beings be God? are they not rather the creations of man's imagination?

### III.—THE IDEA OF GOD (*continued*)

The answer to this question is given by the poet himself in no uncertain tones. One specially significant passage we may note. It occurs in the *Madness of Heracles*, a tragedy dealing with that incident in the life of the national hero which represents the culmination of the malice of the goddess Hera. Enraged that Heracles has successfully accomplished his world-mission of "taming the earth"—civilising it, humanising it by ridding it of monsters<sup>1</sup>—she tries other measures, and seeks to undo the hero by sending madness upon him. Bereft of his wits, blinded and utterly unconscious of what he is doing, Heracles slays his own wife and children. When he comes to himself, his agony and remorse know no bounds. Now all the world will point the finger of scorn at him—*this* is not the son of Zeus, this wife and children slayer! they will

<sup>1</sup> His work is *exēmerōsai gaian* (*Her. Fur.*, 20).

cry. And in his shame he sees no other course open to him but to seek refuge from the disgrace and agony of his deed in death (*Her. Fur.*, 1289).

Theseus, his friend, seeks to console him by pointing out that the guilt of the act is not his, but Hera's. No mortal, he goes on to argue, is free from the taint of such "fatalities" (*tais tychais akēratos*), nor yet the gods themselves, if the poets speak truth (*Her. Fur.*, 1314 *et seq.*). Do they not allow themselves in unlawful love? did they not dishonour their own father by putting him in fetters in order to obtain the sovereignty? And yet they dwell in Olympus, no whit abashed by their sin. And, he reasons, why should Heracles, being a mortal, be overmuch cast down by these "fatalities" (*tychas*), when the gods themselves are not?

What answer does the hero give to this subtle argument?

A very noble one. "Alas!" he says (*Her. Fur.*, 1340 *et seq.*), "this is beside the mark, and toucheth not my wrong-doing. I do *not* believe that the gods ever delighted in unlawful love, nor that the hands of a god were ever put in chains, nor that one god became the master of another. All this I never have thought worthy of belief, and never will believe. *For God, if he be truly God (orthōs Theos), standeth in need of nothing.* Such tales are wretched fables, invented by the bards."

In the *Iphigenia in Tauris*, again, we have another outburst of the same sort, this time directed against the practice of human sacrifice—a practice so remote from ourselves, and so alien to the generally humane ideas of the Greeks, that we are apt to overlook its significance and the fact of its actual existence amongst them. Fifty years have not yet passed since Themistocles found himself compelled, at the bidding of an excited mob, to sacrifice seven noble Persian youths to Dionysus Omēstēs. The very epithet of this deity, "eater of raw flesh," is sufficiently suggestive. There is reason, moreover, to believe that human sacrifice was continued in much later times amongst several of the ruder peoples of Greece (*Welcker*). Euripides then, in inveighing against it, is no Quixote fighting with wind-mills. He is combating no obsolete tradition, but a frightful belief slumbering for the moment, ready to rise and clamour for visible expression in any time of popular excitement.

The heroine of the drama had herself, according to the legend which forms the subject of the beautiful *Iphigenia in Aulis*, fallen a victim to just such a fanatical outburst. Offered up by her father, Agamemnon, in order to appease the wrath of the goddess Artemis, who, on the eve of the Trojan expedition, detains the Greek fleet at Aulis by a calm, Iphigenia has been rescued at the very moment of the sacrifice by the goddess herself, who puts a mountain stag in the place of the human victim, and transports the maiden invisibly through the clouds to Tauris on the Euxine. Here she dwells for years, serving as priestess in the temple of Artemis, and entrusted with the horrible duty of consecrating the human victims offered up in sacrifice to the goddess. This fate befalls every stranger who is unfortunate enough to be cast upon the shores of the land, and Iphigenia, consequently, is often obliged to pronounce sentence of death on her own countrymen. Her whole nature revolts against this detestable ministry. The goddess to her is "noble in name only," but at the opening of the drama she fears to speak her mind openly (*Iph. Taur.*, 36). Later on, the following characteristic speech occurs (*Iph. Taur.*, 380-391):—

"I blame the *inconsistency* of the goddess" (lit. the sophistry = *sophismata* of the goddess, says the latter-day philosopher, speaking through the mouth of the pre-historic heroine), "for, if a mortal hath but touched a corpse, she drives him as an abomination from her altar, and yet herself taketh pleasure in the sacrifice of men, in murder! No daughter of Leto, consort of Zeus



(father of gods and men), could possibly be born to such folly" (*amathia* = ignorance, want of understanding). "Therefore," she continues, alluding to another popular myth, an episode in the annals of her own family, "I judge (*krinō*) the story of Tantalus to be incredible, the fable that he gave a banquet to the gods, and that they feasted on his son. The people here, themselves bloodthirsty, do but seek to lay their own guilt on the goddess. *For no Divine being, I ween, is evil.*"

These utterances suffice to show the attitude of Euripides towards the myths. With religion itself he has no quarrel, but he cannot away with the popular conceptions of God. "No Divine being, I ween, is evil." "If God be truly God, He standeth in need of nothing." Here speaks the disciple of Anaxagoras, the believer in the doctrine that "GOD IS SPIRIT, that MIND is on the throne of the universe." Again, in the words, "I do *not* believe that one god was ever put in chains by another," and the hint that the gods of the popular myths are neither more nor less than "teachers of evil," we hear the friend of Socrates. The reader will recollect the passage in the *Euthyphron* of Plato, where Socrates handles the very same argument. It is said that Socrates never visited the theatre except when a drama of Euripides was to be performed. Granted that the philosopher was a personal friend of our poet, granted also that the persecution to which both were subjected by Aristophanes may have helped to cement their friendship into a still firmer bond of union; there yet remains the fact that Socrates, the man of truth, the lifelong servant of the god of Delphi, testified by his presence at the theatre that he was in sympathy with Euripides, the man who attacked in the most outspoken way the myths concerning the god of Delphi.

It is not only in the *Ion* that Euripides assails the legendary Apollo. His handling of the story of Neoptolemus in the *Andromache* is another example of the same kind.

Neoptolemus (or Pyrrhus), the son of Achilles, had, according to the tradition, on one occasion gone to Delphi, and demanded satisfaction from Apollo, as the patron of the Trojans, for the death of his father before Troy. In the version of the legend followed by Euripides, Neoptolemus afterwards repents of the presumption involved in this act—that he, a mortal, should have dared to call the god to account—and goes again to Delphi to acknowledge his transgression and make reparation to the deity. An enemy, however, seizes the opportunity—Orestes, the son of Agamemnon, who owes Neoptolemus a grudge for having received in marriage Hermione, daughter of Menelaus, king of Sparta, who had promised *him* the hand of the maiden. Out of revenge Orestes also repairs to Delphi and stirs up the townspeople by suggesting that Neoptolemus has come, not to show his repentance, as he professes, but to plunder the temple and treasures of the god. Consequently, when Neoptolemus goes up, alone and unarmed, into the sanctuary to effect his reconciliation, he is attacked by a troop of armed men who have lain in ambush among the laurel bushes.

In vain does the defenceless hero ask why they seek to slay him, a man who has come thither in "the ways of righteousness." A shower of missiles is the only reply, and Neoptolemus in self-defence seizes the weapons which are hanging in the temple, and charges his cowardly assailants, who flee before him like a flock of wood-pigeons before a falcon. Just at this moment, when Neoptolemus is getting the upper hand, an awful voice, which thrills the listeners with horror, issues from the innermost shrine, and summons the scattered crowd once more to the attack. They rally again,

and Neoptolemus falls pierced by the sword of a Delphian, and bruised beyond recognition by the vengeance taken upon his dead body.

For this murder, committed in his own sacred precincts, the god is responsible, inasmuch as the deed has been accomplished under his sanction, for the voice that comes from the temple is his; and the messenger who brings the tidings of his grandson's death to old Peleus concludes his narrative of the occurrence with the following significant words (*Androm.*, 1161-1165): "Thus did the king—he who delivers Oracles to others, he who is to all men the judge of what is right and fair—to the son of Achilles, when he went to make atonement for his sin. *He bore in mind, like any evil man, the ancient grudge.* How then," concludes the messenger, "can he be wise?"

Let it be noted that Euripides does not question the justice of a punishment inflicted for presumption, for Neoptolemus himself confesses that he has done wrong, and comes humbly to offer satisfaction. It is the meanness of the act, as set forth in the tradition, the taking advantage of a defenceless man, the harbouring of the "ancient grudge," that rouses the indignation of the poet, and inspires the pointed question: *How can a god, who acts like a vindictive mortal, be wise?*

**The Slaying of Clytemnestra.**—The wisdom of the mythical Apollo is also questioned by Euripides as it displayed itself in the ancient legend of the slaying of Clytemnestra by Orestes, at the command of the Delphic Oracle. The terrible tragedy, enacted, according to the tradition, at Mycenæ, had been magnificently dealt with, as we know, in the great trilogy of Æschylus, who handled the story on the old heroic lines which we have already examined,<sup>1</sup> i.e. that it was *necessary* to make an example of the husband-slayer, if human society was not to go to pieces; that Orestes, as next-of-kin, was bound to be the avenger of his father's blood; finally, that the event showed the Divine wisdom, for the awful nature of the deed led to the practical supersession of the private or individual avenger by the establishment of a public and regularly constituted court of justice, the Areopagus, empowered to deal with such cases. Æschylus, in short, treated the legend, after his usual fashion, from the standpoint of the Divine necessity, i.e. the Divine justice working in the affairs of men to uphold the world-order.

Euripides treats the story from his own standpoint in two different dramas, the *Orestes* and the *Electra*, which follow respectively the fortunes of the son and daughter of Agamemnon. As works of art these plays are undoubtedly far inferior to the masterpiece of Æschylus; but they are exceedingly interesting, not only as evidence of the critical spirit of the age, but as marking the progress of the moral idea. The deed which was accepted as a necessity by an Æschylus now presents itself to a Euripides as a grave moral difficulty in connection with the character of a god. That such an act as the slaying of a mother by her own son should not only have received the Divine sanction, but have been initiated and carried out under Divine compulsion, is a "fact" which Euripides finds it very difficult to accept. The case is pithily put from his standpoint by the chorus in the *Andromache* (1027 *et seq.*). "The son of Atreus," they say, "fell by the hand of his consort, and she, in return, suffered a violent death at the hands of her children. From God, from God!" they add with vehemence, "came the prophetic command that visited her; and he, the son of Agamemnon, at the bidding of the Oracle, became *the murderer of his mother.* O God! O Phœbus! *how shall I believe it?*"

In the prologue to the *Orestes* (30), Electra herself admits that the slaying of their mother by Orestes—a deed in which she herself had taken part, "so

<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, p. 375.



far as a woman could" (*i.e.* by encouraging and urging on Orestes)—is "not praised by every one." This mild confession receives amplification a few lines further on, when she states that both her brother and herself have been put under the ban of the State: no one dare offer fire to them, the mother-slayers, receive them under his roof, or speak to them. Nay, their ultimate fate is already determined, for the council of Argos meets that very day to decide whether they shall be put to death by stoning or by the sword. Finally, the death-sentence is passed upon them by the citizens; the plea that the deed was done at the bidding of Apollo is not accepted, and the only concession granted to the two actors in the tragedy is that they are allowed to fall by their own hand, a fate from which they are, of course, rescued by Apollo.

In this action of the citizens the poet would represent the natural feeling of horror aroused by the crime in the conscience of humanity, and the refusal of right-thinking folk to believe that it could have been instigated by a god. In this feeling Orestes and Electra themselves share. They know that the Oracle commanded the perpetration of the deed, but they are very doubtful as to its rightfulness. Thus, when Menelaus on his unexpected return from Troy finds his nephew half distraught, and asks him what disease it is that so torments him, Orestes replies (*Or.*, 396): "'Tis conscience (*sunesis*); I *know* that I have done an awful deed." Earlier he has said to Electra in private (*Or.*, 285 *et seq.*): "I blame Apollo, who urged me on to this unholiest of acts. . . . If I had seen my father eye to eye, and asked *him* whether I must slay my mother, he would, I ween, have stretched forth his hands with many prayers, and begged me not to draw the sword on her who bore me."

As for Electra, she exclaims (*Or.*, 162 *et seq.*): "Yea, it was a crime that Apollo, seated on the tripod, the throne of Themis (law and order), unjustly commanded." And when the chorus try to comfort her by saying that the deed *was* "just," she retorts (*Or.*, 194): "Yes, but not noble."

Throughout both dramas the conflict of duties that constitutes the dilemma in which Orestes is placed and the doubtful wisdom of Apollo come out vividly. This is especially the case in a dialogue between the brother and sister in the *Electra* (970 *et seq.*):—

*Or.*—Alas! how shall I slay her who nourished me and bore me?

*El.*—As she slew *him*, my father and thine own.

*Or.*—O Phœbus! great folly hast thou spoken——

*El.*—If Apollo be foolish, who then is wise?

*Or.*—When thou didst bid me slay my mother.

*El.*—What can harm thee when thou dost avenge thy father?

*Or.*—Now, as a mother-slayer, I, once innocent, must flee.

*El.*—If thy father thou avenge not, impious wilt thou be.

*Or.*—If I avenge my father, I must answer for my mother's blood.

*El.*—To *him* (the god) thou'lt have to answer if thou neglect thy *father's* cause.

*Or.*—Was't not an avenging spirit (the *alastōr* of our race) that spake in likeness of the god?

*El.*—What! on the sacred tripod? That I, at least, believe not.

*Or.*—And *I* can *not* believe that this Oracle hath been well spoken.

Whether the Oracle had been "well spoken" or not was a question that was probably often discussed in the days of Euripides, and the opinion of the common man is in all likelihood that put into the mouth of old Tyndareus, the father of Clytemnestra, where he says (*Or.*, 491 *et seq.*) that he can never, indeed, excuse the conduct of his daughter, but that Orestes ought simply to have put her forth from his house, and accused her before a legal tribunal.

This procedure, of course, was impossible in the period depicted in the tradition; but the obligation which lay upon Apollo, as the dispenser of justice to men, to establish such a tribunal *before* rather than after the commission of the deed, seems to be hinted at. Hence, as we have seen, in the *Electra* the Oracle is charged with folly, *i.e.* ignorance of the right. When Apollo delivered it, he showed himself, says Menelaus in the *Orestes* (417), "most ignorant of what was right and just."

This is evidently the opinion of the ordinary man of the day. As for Euripides, the friend of Socrates—the servant of the god of Delphi, the god who alone is "wise"—he does not believe that such an Oracle was ever delivered by Apollo. As he asks through the chorus in the *Andromache*: "How *shall I believe it?*" The tradition is at fault.

**The Sin of Helen.**—That another tradition, perhaps the most widely diffused of all legends throughout Greece, was also at fault, is declared in very plain terms by our poet. The story of the sin of Helen, daughter of Zeus, the most beautiful woman in the world, and the cause of the expedition against Troy, is discussed by him in the most uncompromising manner in many of his dramas, and in its popular form rejected.

In order to follow the reasoning of Euripides, it is necessary to bear in mind that Helen was worshipped in Sparta as the daughter of the highest god of Hellas and sister of the Dioscuri. This worship follows of necessity from her birth. Thus Apollo says in the *Orestes* (1635, 1675): "*As the child of Zeus, she must live . . . and be enthroned by the side of Hera, and be honoured by men as Divine with libations for ever.*" That she, the adulteress, the cause of untold suffering to thousands, should receive Divine honours, must have been—to judge from the attention given to the subject by Euripides—one of the moral puzzles connected with the myths which would seem to have troubled even the ordinary mind of the period. The traditional conduct of Helen introduced unspeakable confusion into the moral region. Thus the chorus in the *Helen* asks (1137): "Who among mortals can discern *what* is God, or not God, or the middle nature," *i.e.* what is Divine, or human, or heroic (the race midway between God and man, to which in the popular belief Helen belonged), when he sees the affair of the gods involved in such unexpected contradictions? "For thou, O Helen," they add, "art a daughter of Zeus . . . and yet thou, throughout Hellas, art reputed unrighteous, a traitress (to thy husband and thy country), faithless, godless!"

How are these traditions to be reconciled?

Euripides sets himself to explain the matter in two different ways:—

(1) In the one, as a concession to the popular tradition and the fact of the existing worship, he accepts the story of the Divine birth of Helen; but, he says, it was not *she*, the daughter of Zeus, who wrought the mischief in Hellas. This version of the legend is worked out in the drama bearing her name, where Helen is represented as having been carried secretly in a cloud to Egypt, whilst an *eidolon*, a wraith or phantom wearing her likeness, is put in her place in Sparta, and given to the Phrygian Paris in order to accomplish the purposes of Zeus in the Trojan war.

That war Euripides, in common with Thucydides and the whole ancient world, accepts as an historical fact, and he endeavours, in his philosophic way, to show that it was a real benefit to Hellas. For it not only (a) delivered Mother Earth (as he says in the *Helen* and elsewhere—*Hel.*, 30; *Or.*, 1639) from the too great burden of men under which she groaned, and (b) made known to the world the greatest of her sons (Achilles), but (c), as he points out in the *Andromache* (680 *et seq.*), "it trained the Greeks, who were ignorant of arms,



to manliness; for experience,"<sup>1</sup> he adds, "is in all things the teacher of mortals." The argument is, that to bring about all these benefits Helen must suffer; but, the poet says, she does so "unwillingly, and in order that the purposes of the gods might be fulfilled."

This being so, we are told (*Hel.*, 45) that Zeus "was not regardless of his daughter," but brought her to Egypt out of harm's way, in order that she "might be faithful to Menelaus." Paris meanwhile is deceived by the wraith, who accompanies him to Troy; and the Greeks ultimately find that they have literally been fighting for a shadow, which vanishes when the purposes of the gods have been fulfilled in the destruction of Troy (*Hel.*, 1216).

This legend is miserably weak and unreal in comparison with the noble old epic as told by Homer. Nevertheless it is not devoid of interest as an attempt to reconcile opposites and to explain the inexplicable. The heroine of the *Helen* is a good and true wife, who prays to be kept pure, so that if her "name is dishonoured in Hellas," she herself "may be saved from shame" (*Hel.*, 65). She remains faithful to her husband though sought in marriage by the ruler of the land, the king of Egypt, and grieves over her own dower of beauty, which has proved so fatal to her (*Hel.*, 260). This is the Helen worshipped at Sparta, the Helen who, on her return home, lives down by her sweetness and modesty the terrible scandal connected with her name, and is thereby worthy to receive Divine honours in common with her brothers, the Divine patrons of Sparta.

(2) The other version of the story, however, is very different, and in it we have beyond a doubt the true mind of Euripides. The ideal set forth in the *Helen* was what we have ventured to style it, a "concession" to existing sentiment: "If they *will* worship her, let them have at least a pure woman in their thoughts." In the other version Euripides is once more in armour, riding full tilt against every absurdity that comes in his way. In the *Iphigenia in Aulis* (798) he cuts at the root of the matter by suggesting that the popularly received account of her birth as given in the myth of Leda and the swan—a relic of the animal-worship of the olden time—is only a preposterous fable, one of the "idle myths which, writ in the tablets of the Muses, have come down to man in an evil hour." The words translated "in an evil hour" (*para kairon*) may also be rendered "out of season." Tales, he implies, which passed as truth in the infancy of the world cannot be palmed off on a thinking age. They are simply *para kairon*, out of season, out of date, and the sooner they are thrown out of popular currency the better. Even in the *Helen* the heroine is very doubtful as to the truth of the tradition respecting her birth.<sup>2</sup> Elsewhere Euripides will not allow her Divine origin in any way whatsoever (*Or.*, 1584). The Helen of the second version is a traitress to her husband and fatherland, and as such a wretch bringing pollution to Hellas, one who is an abomination to the gods, hated of all men as a great evil, and detested by all women as a disgrace to her sex. Can such an one be the child of Zeus, highest god? Never!

"Never, O daughter of Tyndareus," says Andromache in the *Trojan Women* (766 *et seq.*), "never wast thou the child of Zeus. From many fathers I maintain that thou didst spring, first from the *alastōr*,<sup>3</sup> then from envy, from murder, death, and whatsoever evil is brought forth of earth. Never will I allow that Zeus begat thee, the bane (*kēra*) of barbarians and of Greeks."

**The Temptation of Helen.**—So much for the story of Helen's Divine

<sup>1</sup> Lit. intercourse with others and so instruction=learning by observing what others do.

<sup>2</sup> She says in the prologue (21): "If the fable, *logos*, is true."

<sup>3</sup> The avenging spirit of her race.

birth. Of the tale of her temptation and its origin—the famous old legend of the contest for the prize of beauty—Euripides in the same drama disposes in the most trenchant fashion. Let us follow the course of his argument.

After the destruction of Troy, while the city is yet blazing, we see the little group of high-born women who have been seized by the Greek chieftains assembled in tents by the sea-shore awaiting the pleasure of their new lords. From these captives the drama of the *Trojan Women*, one of the most pathetic ever penned by our poet, takes its name. Among the captives, of course, are Hekabē, widow of Priam, whilom queen of Troy, now a slave, and Helen, the traitress. Menelaus, her former husband, appears in quest of the latter, but this Menelaus is not the loving, forgiving husband represented elsewhere. No! he comes, surrounded by armed retainers, breathing vengeance against the woman who has ruined his life, and bids the attendants drag “the polluted murderess” forth by her hair. To the ships with her! She shall not be granted the luxury of an easy death in Troy, but shall be carried home, and given over to the hands of those whose friends have fallen through her sin.

This decision of Menelaus is hailed with joy by Hekabē; but Helen, appalled at the fearful prospect before her, begs to be allowed to speak in extenuation of her fault.

“I am not come to argue, but to slay thee,” is the stern reply.

However, at the intervention of Hekabē, who promises to answer her argument, whatever it may be, Helen is granted leave to plead for herself, and she makes her defence on the well-known lines.

The three goddesses, she says (*Tro.*, 914 *et seq.*), had endeavoured to secure, each for herself, the distinction of being styled “the most beautiful,” by offering to the judge a tempting bait: Pallas Athena promises to Paris the conquest of Hellas; Hera, the lordship over Asia as well as Europe; but Kypris (Aphrodite = Venus), amazed at the beauty of Helen, offers *her* in marriage to Paris. Now consider, pursues Helen; “*Kypris* was victorious, and my marriage, therefore, saved Hellas” from the rule of the sword of the barbarian. Through Helen it was that Hellas had escaped the foreign yoke. What brought safety to Hellas, however, had brought ruin to her. “I was sold for my beauty,” says Helen, “and disgraced for reasons which should have placed a crown upon my head.” But, she continues, Menelaus will say that she had not as yet mentioned why she herself had stolen secretly from his house. “There came,” she explains, “with *him*, the *alastōr*, my destroyer (whom thou mayst call Alexander, or Paris, if thou wilt), a goddess of no small might. I shall not ask of thee but of myself this question: Where were my senses when I left my home and followed the stranger, a traitor to my fatherland and to my house? Chastise the goddess (who robbed me of my wits), and be stronger than great Zeus, for he who is lord of other gods is himself her slave. (Do this, if thou canst), but—pardon me.”

*Blame the gods, and pardon me! Make allowance for me! συγγνώμῃ δ' ἐμοί, have fellow-feeling with me!* is the gist of Helen's argument, and it is not too much to affirm that the plea would be accepted by the great majority of the vast audience who, at the Dionysiac Festival, listened to the argument. The story of the judgment of Paris they had heard so frequently from childhood upwards, had beheld the scene on Ida so often depicted in works of art, that the narrative was now received without question as part of the legacy of tradition. On her own showing, Helen is a martyr, a patriot, who has averted slavery from Hellas. As to her sin, who among those present had



not felt the promptings of that "goddess of no small might" who had stolen the senses of the frail beauty?

Undoubtedly, up to this point Helen carries the day, and would have the full *suggnōmēn*, fellow-feeling and sympathy, of the assembly. How then does Euripides answer the specious argument?

By the simple process of making his audience *think*.

"Queen! help thy children!" cry the captives; "defend the fatherland. Bring to naught her persuasive tongue, for *she* speaks well who is herself the evil-doer."

Old Hekabē thereupon takes the word, and through her Euripides himself makes reply as follows:—

"First, I will become the ally of the gods," she says, "and show that she hath not spoken according to the right. For I, at least, do not believe that Hera and the virgin-goddess Pallas could ever condescend to folly such as this. Shall Hera sell her Argos to the barbarians, Pallas give up her Athens to the Phrygian? Impossible! They came in sport to Ida, jesting about this beauty-prize. For why should goddess Hera have such longing to be beautiful? That she might find a nobler spouse than Zeus (the king of gods)? And Athena, did *she* seek marriage with a god, she who sought permission of her father to lead the virgin-life, and fled from wedlock? *Make not the gods so foolish, to cloak thine own misdeed*," is the trenchant command. "The wise thou'lt not persuade. And Kypris, so thou sayst," pursues old Hekabē, in allusion to the alleged "compulsion" by Venus, the plea put forth by all the poets, from Homer downwards—"Kypris came to the house of Menelaus with my son? Most ludicrous! for could not the goddess, abiding calmly in the heavens, have carried thee to Ilion together with thy city? My son was noble and distinguished, and at sight of him *thy mind was Kypris*. For every folly to mortals is Aphrodite, and rightly doth this name rule the senseless.<sup>1</sup> Thou, I ween, didst look upon my son in his shining splendour, and straightway lost thy wits. For in thine Argive home thou hadst but little, and, leaving Sparta, didst expect the Phrygian city, with its overflowing gold, would satisfy thy longings; for never did Menelaus' house suffice to pamper to the full thy daintiness. When thou camest to us oft and again, I warned thee. 'Daughter!' I said, 'go forth! my sons will then take other wives. Come! and in secret I will send thee to the Achæan ships!' But no! the thought to thee was bitter; for 'twas thy will to play the wanton in the halls of Alexander, and to be worshipped by barbarians. *This*, to thee, was something great. And therefore, whensoever thou didst appear abroad, thy person was tricked out, and yet"—old Hekabē pauses, and points with finger uplifted to the pure blue sky above—"thou didst behold, together with thy husband, this self-same ether! *O despicable!*"

"*Thy mind was Kypris!*" At the words the glamour of the old tale vanishes: the sensitive shrinking which shields as with a veil the hapless demon-compelled Helen of the *Iliad* falls away, and the actual Helen of the real world stands disclosed—the product of desires unchastened and thirst for vulgar admiration.

"Make not THE GODS so foolish, to cloak thine own misdeed." Here, as in the *Iphigenia in Tauris*, Euripides boldly proclaims the origin of the moral contradictions in the myths: "The people . . . do but seek to lay their own guilt upon the gods; for no Divine being, I ween, is evil."

**The Orgiastic Cults.**—Against the popular conception of two of the gods in particular Euripides wages war. These are Aphrodite and Dionysus, deities

<sup>1</sup> A play upon the words *Aphro-ditē*, *Aphro-synē*.

of semi-foreign character, whose cults were fast outstripping in popularity the sober worship of the genuine old divinities of Hellas. Zeus, the father of gods and men; Apollo, revealer of his will to mortals; Athena, wisdom personified—these three representatives of the best early religious belief of Greece—the deities revered by an Æschylus—are already beginning to retreat in the time of Euripides into the background before their younger and more fascinating rivals. That a comparatively pure goddess of love,<sup>1</sup> a native, honest old god of wine, had been worshipped for centuries in Greece, there can be no doubt. In the days of the reaction, however, these home-born cults had become overlaid with Orientalism, and to the Greek modes of worship objectionable features, wild and exciting, borrowed from the East, had been added.

The words of our poet in the *Hippolytus* (106), "No worship of the gods by night delighteth me," are significant of his attitude towards these orgiastic cults. There were, however, difficulties in the way of his giving too open expression to his dislike. How to attack the obnoxious cults without at the same time drawing down upon himself the enmity of the multitude and the hatred of those who still clung passionately to the traditional faith was a puzzling problem. The solution of it is, we venture to think, to be looked for in the two dramas in which Aphrodite and Dionysus are respectively the dominating influence—the *Hippolytus* and the *Bacchæ*. In these two tragedies Euripides seems to have conceived and worked out the idea of displaying by the whole drift of the story, and in a few significant touches plain enough to "the wise" among his audience, the true character of the popular deities—*verbum sap.* Thus without comment he leaves the leaven to work, a manner of procedure which we meet with again later on in Thucydides.

In the *Hippolytus* we have a tragic story, the elements of which will be more fitly discussed elsewhere, but which culminates in the death of a noble youth whose only fault is that he prefers Artemis, the goddess of chastity, to Aphrodite = sensual love. The prologue to the drama is spoken by Aphrodite herself, and in it she reveals (*Hipp.*, 7) in brief her character. She is worshipped, she says (and truly), from the Pontus to the Atlantic by all who behold the sun; those among men who reverence her power she honours, but whatsoever defies it she overthrows, "for there is innate in hearts of gods this feeling, that they rejoice when they are honoured by mortals." Hippolytus alone, the son of Theseus of Athens, resists her sway; he has called her "the worst of deities," despises the joys she proffers, and holds in honour "as the greatest goddess" the virgin sister of Phœbus, with whom he hunts in woods and fields, enjoying with her a more familiar intercourse than beseemeth mortals. "Of this I am not jealous. Why should I be?" says the goddess, adding with a bitterness which belies her words, "but for that wherein he hath sinned against me, Hippolytus shall pay the penalty to-day. For this I have long since made preparation, and need take little trouble further."

The preparation referred to is of the most diabolical nature—nothing less than the enticing of a young wife to a hideous sin, the guilt of which is to light upon the innocent head of Hippolytus. The young wife, Phædra, is one who might have expected mercy at the hands of the goddess, for she has erected a temple to her in Athens. Nevertheless, although Aphrodite knows that the working out of her revenge will involve the ruin of Phædra, she throws her votary overboard with the utmost callousness. "Phædra shall die with honour," she says (*Hipp.*, 47), "but die she must; for not so highly do I rate the evil befalling her as to let mine adversaries slip without exacting from them such a penalty as I consider adequate." To accomplish her revenge,

<sup>1</sup> The Urania of Plato.



then, Aphrodite, this so-called divinity, does not hesitate to adopt the basest and vilest of means: she destroys in mind and body her own votary, and compasses by a lie the death of her adversary, a noble and innocent youth.

The plot of the *Bacchæ* turns upon the tradition that the relatives of Semele, daughter of Cadmus, king of Thebes, refused to believe that she had been the "bride of Zeus," and, consequently, that her son, Dionysus, was a "god." When he comes of age, Dionysus returns from Asia to Thebes for the express purpose of establishing his claim to divinity. And what is the proof thereof? The madness which he sends upon those who have rejected him, a madness in which a mother—to gratify the spite of him, the so-called god—tears in pieces her own son.

There are critics who take the *Bacchæ* as a serious effort on the part of our poet to uphold the traditional worship of Dionysus. Certainly, if the drama stood alone, and we had no other evidence of the mind of Euripides, this interpretation might pass, since there are not wanting passages which seem to lend it support. The diabolical nature of the punishment inflicted by Dionysus, however, upon a wise ruler, whose only fault is that he objects to a cult which leads the whole female population of his city to desert their homes and spend their nights upon the mountains, must surely be taken into account in considering the tendency of a drama in which, as we have said, the poet leaves his audience to point the moral. The action of Pentheus, the victim of the wrath of Dionysus, would have been upheld by every right-thinking man in the vast audience who followed the action of the play.<sup>1</sup>

We must recollect that Dionysus had two sides to his character, both of which our poet portrays. (1) He is the giver of the wine that cheers the heart of man, as Demeter is of the bread that nourishes his body; (2) wine, as the noblest of gifts, was poured out in libation to the gods, and regarded as efficacious in securing their favour; (3) these benefits he diffuses to rich and poor without distinction. With this side of his character—which is probably that of the old genuine Greek wine-god, in whose honour the great Dionysiac Festival was founded—Euripides has no quarrel. This Dionysus, like Demeter, was both sacred and beloved; to an intensely democratic people like the Athenians, he, the bringer of joy to all alike, was infinitely more than the aristocratic Apollo revered in Sparta.<sup>2</sup> But there was another aspect in which the god was more dreaded than beloved. Attached to the newer developments of his cult there was a strange frenzy—not attributable to the effects of wine—which infected the worshippers like a mania, and which is not without its modern antitypes in certain rites still practised in the East. Against such frenzies no reasoning could prevail, and this aspect of the Dionysiac worship it is which is set forth in the drama. Cadmus, and Teiresias the seer, both "wise men," have resolved to take part in it, because the gods have so commanded—although, as Teiresias hints, it passes the understanding of man, and although the divinity of Dionysus may be, as Cadmus openly suggests, "a lie." Are we, then, to imagine that because, in the *Bacchæ* (203, 333), Dionysus triumphs over his adversary, the poet is in sympathy with a triumph which is nothing but revenge, or with the horrible cult which the tragedy depicts?

The whole drift of the mind of Euripides, as we know it already, must answer the question.

"No Divine being, I ween, is evil." The Aphrodite of the *Hippolytus* and the Dionysus of the *Bacchæ* are simply demons. They are possessed of a

<sup>1</sup> The orgiastic worship of Dionysus was forbidden by law in Sparta.

<sup>2</sup> See our companion volume, under Dionysus.

demoniac power, but it is that which we moderns call "Satanic." Both are actuated by the same paltry motive—wounded vanity, the desire to be revenged for a personal slight. In both cases their victims are infinitely nobler than themselves: the one perishes because he will not be false to his oath, the other because he will not worship what he believes to be "a lie." Euripides is content to tell the story of each as handed down, and leave it to preach its own moral:—

*Hellas, behold thy gods!*

His own attitude is sufficiently indicated by the despairing cry of the dying Hippolytus: "O that a mortal might curse the gods!" *i.e.* such gods as these.

#### IV.—THE IDEA OF GOD—WHAT GOD IS

##### COMMUNICATION OF HIS WILL. OMENS AND ORACLES

**What God is.**—The message of Euripides to his countrymen on the most momentous of questions was then, as the foregoing shows, mainly a negative one. He could tell them in no uncertain notes what God was *not*—not revengeful, not passionful, not evil in any way whatsoever. The old myths which depicted the Divine nature as sharing in the frailties and sins of men were in his judgment, as we have seen, nothings, "idle tales," "inventions of the bards," "follies" to be utterly rejected. And in this iconoclastic destroying of ancient strongholds Euripides fulfilled his mission. It was his to pull down—in a far less degree to build up. The development of the idea of God pursued its own ordered course, and in the historical sequence of things we have no right to look to him for any clear vision of the Divine to put in the place of the shattered idol. If the philosopher Anaxagoras himself is wavering and hesitating, and his *Nous* a mere abstraction, we need not be surprised that a contemporary poet should betray uncertainty as to the personality and nature of that Divine power to whose existence and working in the world he nevertheless so unmistakably testifies. This uncertainty, we must recollect, was shared even by an Æschylus. "Zeus! if so it please thee to be called," he says, addressing the power behind the mythical Zeus; and Sophocles has an utterance of the same kind.<sup>1</sup>

In this connection one passage in particular of our poet has been much criticised, both on account of its assumed "atheistic" tendency and on account of its equally assumed "want of dramatic fitness," inasmuch as the said passage is put into the mouth of a woman and a "barbarian." To the present writer it seems that, if the lines in question be looked at in the light of all that we already know about our author, both charges will prove to be without foundation. Let us examine them.

"O thou!" says the aged Hekabē (*Tro.*, 884 *et seq.*) out of the depths of her misery, "thou who bearest up the earth, thou who art enthroned above the earth, whosoe'er thou mayest be, inscrutable, hard to know, Zeus!—whether thou art necessity of nature or mind of men—to thee have I prayed, for all affairs of mortals thou dost lead in silent paths of justice."

Where is atheism here?

"Zeus!" says Hekabē in effect, "whether thou be the law, innate in the Kosmos, the world-order, or something distinct—that *Nous*, the reason which worketh in the minds of mortals—hard thou art indeed to know, inscrutable; and yet to thee have I prayed, for thou dost bear up the earth, art enthroned

<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, pp. 362, 384.



above it, and dost guide in silent paths the affairs of men in accordance with justice."

Where is the atheism here? "Groping after God" indeed we see, but of the licence that disowns a God not a trace.

And as to "dramatic fitness," the study of our poet as such lies beyond our province, but we may perhaps be permitted to point out that the Hekabē of the *Trojan Women* is not the Hekabē of the drama bearing her name. There she is the much-enduring woman, utterly worn down, driven to desperation by the accumulation of misfortune. Here, in the commencement of her captivity, she still retains possession of her powers, and appears throughout—not in this one instance only—as a woman of masculine understanding, well able to think and reason. She it is (as we recollect) who unveils the hypocrisy of Helen—"Thy mind was Kypris"—and the advice which she gives her daughters and companions in misery is stamped with the same practical, matter-of-fact grasp of the situation. The exclamation which we have just examined is called forth by the determination of Menelaus to punish Helen, the "blood-stained murderess." In this decision Hekabē sees a righteous retribution, the action of Him who leads the affairs of men, "according to eternal justice," to a fitting issue.

This uncertainty as to the real nature of the Divine power shows itself also in Euripides, as in his contemporaries, in the substitution of such expressions as the Divinity,<sup>1</sup> and the æther, for the name of a god.

For an example of the use of the latter phrase, we need go no farther than this same drama, where we have already seen it employed with fine effect by Hekabē in her reproachful address to Helen. "Thou didst adorn thyself," she says, "to be admired of other men, and yet thou didst behold, together with thy (*much-wronged*) husband, the same æther"—this pure, impalpable, all-penetrating essence, emblem of the surrounding, all-encompassing power which moves on in silent paths, leading the affairs of men to the right goal.

A sorry interpretation of this beautiful phrase would it be, indeed, to see in "the æther," as used by Euripides, nothing but the combination of gases which we call "the atmosphere." Far rather does he employ it as we ourselves do "heaven." Substitute the word "heaven" for "æther" in the passages where it occurs, and we see at once what the speaker means. Thus, in the *Iphigenia in Aulis* (365), in the quarrel between the brothers, when Menelaus reproaches Agamemnon with his change of front, and reminds him of what he had promised, he says: "'Tis this self-same æther which heard thy words"—high heaven is witness. Euripides himself leaves us, happily, in no doubt as to his intention, for in the drama which we have just been examining (the *Trojan Women*, 1077), the chorus says: "It is a grief and care to me when I wonder whether thou, O king, who hast established thy heavenly throne in æther, takest thought for us and our burning city, or no." Here Zeus, the king, is perfectly distinct from "æther," and the sentence could be legitimately paraphrased thus: "O God, who hast established Thy throne in the heavens, carest Thou for the fate which has overtaken us, or not?"

*His Certainty.*—So much for our poet's uncertainties. Let us now turn to the brighter side, and conclude our survey of his contribution to the development of the great idea by a brief glance at a few passages in which, abandoning his questioning attitude, Euripides shows himself imbued with the deepest religious feeling—that feeling in which the soul is constrained to turn to God by the impulse of its own nature.

<sup>1</sup> *To Theion*.

"O Zeus!" prays Menelaus in the *Helen* (1441) at the supreme moment when his own fate and that of his wife are hanging in the balance, "thou art called 'FATHER' and a wise GOD. Look down upon us, and deliver us from these our miseries. If THOU but touch us with thy finger-tip, we are at the haven whither we would be." (Cf. Ps. cvii. 30.)

And so, in the *Suppliants* (734), when the messenger announces to the anxious Argive mothers the unexpected triumph of the righteous cause, they exclaim, "Hereby we believe now in the gods!" and Adrastus adds, with evident reference to the all-controlling power behind the gods:—

"O Zeus! why do wretched mortals say they *think*?"<sup>1</sup> "On THEE we hang, and do but work out that which thou dost will."

Finally, the same drama has a very interesting passage which not only reveals to us our poet as the worthy friend of Socrates, but may without hesitation (for reasons which we shall mention shortly) be regarded as a kind of *Gegenstück* to the celebrated ode of Sophocles on the grand achievements of man.<sup>2</sup> This passage, put in the mouth of Theseus (the representative of the purest religious feeling of Athens), is introduced by a reference to a question which seems to have been a favourite subject of discussion in our poet's day, viz. "Is good or evil predominant in the affairs of men?"

We may, therefore, fairly infer that in the whole statement of the argument we have the mind of Euripides himself, for Theseus is, as we shall presently see, his ideal of a noble man—not only the noble man of the monarchy and the hoary past, but the upholder of the modern liberal and democratic opinions of the poet's own age. Hence the passage is of great subjective value. "I have often striven," he says (*Suppl.*, 195 *et seq.*), "and contended eagerly with others, who declared that there was more evil than good upon the earth. *For I hold the contrary opinion.* [The goods enjoyed by mortals are more than the evils. For, if this were not so, we should no longer see the light.]"<sup>3</sup> I bless that God who hath *ordered*<sup>4</sup> our life, and brought it out of confusion and brute nature, first by inspiring us with understanding (*synesis*), and then by giving to us speech, the messenger of thought (whereby intercourse becometh possible), and also nourishment, the fruit of earth, and rain that droppeth down from heaven, quickening the seed, refreshing man and beast. Yea, more, He hath provided shelter from the winter's storms and from the summer's heat, hath guided us across the sea, that we might gain by interchange with others those things wherein our land was lacking. That which is dark and indistinct to us we learn by divination, by gazing in the fire, and seers make known to us our destiny by sacrifice and signs of birds. Do we not therefore sin," so argues the poet, "if, when God hath made so bountiful provision for our life, we are not content therewith? But human thought," he adds, "seeketh to be stronger than God, and in the folly that dwelleth in our hearts we imagine ourselves to be wiser than the gods."

Here Euripides defends his belief (that the good on earth outweighs the bad) against the pessimistic thinkers of the day on the evidence of the beneficence shown in the constitution of man himself and in the provision made for him in nature. All the "triumphs," therefore, which Sophocles attributes to the inventive ingenuity of mortals, Euripides traces directly to

<sup>1</sup> *Phronēin* = deem themselves to be wise.

<sup>2</sup> See *ante*, p. 129.

<sup>3</sup> Lines 199, 200, enclosed in brackets, are held by some to be an interpolation. In any case, the sense is sufficiently clear without them.

<sup>4</sup> *Diastathmēsato* = ordered by rule, measured and bounded our life, assigned us our limits; a truly Greek idea. (See p. 99.)



the benevolent purposes of the Divine power. The two poets, in fact, seem to change places—Euripides, the so-called Rationalist, setting forth the teleological side of the argument, whilst Sophocles regards it from the purely human side. Needless to point out, both reasonings have their element of truth. If we claim for Euripides that he discerns the golden side of the great shield, the beneficent initiative taken by the Divinity, we cannot but see an intense reality also in the evolutionary processes described by Sophocles—the working out and developing by man of the genius entrusted to him.

That the Divine initiative should be recognised by Euripides the rationaliser, and the human effort by Sophocles the believer in the Divine origin of the great laws, is in itself a beautiful coincidence, a proof (if such were needed) that the same Divine Logos worked out His plans by means of both—His instruments.

**God's Mode of Communicating His Will. Omens and Portents.**—It may, however, appear strange to us that a rationalising thinker should bring forward omens and portents amid the "goods," the benefits conferred by providence on human life. Moreover, the sentiment here expressed is directly at variance with opinions set forth elsewhere by our poet. How is this fresh contradiction to be reconciled? Let us look into it. Perhaps, with a little patience, we may be able to look at the matter as it presented itself to him.

In the first place, Euripides, as we have repeatedly pointed out, is before all else an iconoclast. A sham and a lie usurping the place of God he is bound to expose. The Divinity of the message must be proved by the purity of the messenger. Hence, in the *Helen* (922), the heroine says to the Egyptian prophetess Theonoe (Divine insight): "'Twould be indeed most shameful if thou, possessor of all Divine knowledge, knew'st not THE RIGHT," and Theonoe reassures both her and Menelaus by the beautiful reply (1002): "There is within my breast (as seer) a mighty sanctuary of JUSTICE," which prevents her from taking any unfair advantage arising from her prescience.

Again, with the so-called "seer" of his own day and his pretensions, Euripides evidently has no sympathy. In this he only pushes a little farther the dislike to such pretensions found even in Homer. The Telemachus of Homer says:

"No more do I put faith in tidings, whencesoever they may come, neither have I any regard unto any divination, whereof my mother may inquire at the lips of a diviner, when she hath bidden him to the hall."

So, in like manner, the Achilles of Euripides takes the same ground. Achilles, be it remembered, is the proverbial man of truth, the man who "hates a lie more than the gates of hell"; and he it is who in the *Iphigenia in Aulis* (956) exclaims: "What is a seer? A man who hits upon a little truth amid many lies."

And hence, again, in the *Helen*, the faithful old slave and friend of Menelaus, when he discovers that the Greeks have been deceived as to the presence of the real Helen in Troy, says, in reference to Calchas the seer, who apparently had been as ignorant of the deception as the others (*Hel.*, 744): "As to soothsayers and seers, I see from this how vain they are and full of falsity. There was nothing sound or wholesome either in the flame of fire or in the cries of birds (the auguries used by the seer). It is folly even to imagine that birds can counsel mortals. For neither did Calchas (the Greek seer) nor Helenus (the Trojan) ever tell the army or give a sign that their friends were perishing for the sake of a phantom. No! the city was destroyed for nothing. You will say, perhaps, that he kept silence because the god would not allow him to disclose the secret? Then why should we consult the

seer at all? Let us, indeed, pray to the gods and offer sacrifice, but leave soothsaying (*manteia*) alone! for soothsaying was invented as an idle bait. No lazy fellow ever grew rich by gazing into the fire. The best soothsaying is good judgment and good counsel (*eu-boulia*)."

"I, too," chimes in the chorus, "agree with all that the old man says about soothsaying. If a man has *the gods for friends*, he has the best of soothsaying in his house."

Now, although the seers and the soothsaying thus arraigned in the two passages cited ultimately hold their own by the fulfilment of "the purposes of the gods" in both cases, yet it is evident that Euripides is here giving expression to a deep-rooted feeling concerning the seer of later times. What called forth this antipathy we learn later from Plato, who paints for us the seer of his own day, no longer as the dignified prophet of early tradition, but as the charlatan living on the strength of the early tradition, pursuing his quasi-sacred calling as a trade, and going from house to house and preying upon weak-minded people, much in the fashion of fortune-tellers of succeeding ages. In the time of Euripides things could not have been much better, and, therefore, here also as elsewhere our poet, in throwing a doubt upon the seer, is simply fulfilling his mission and handing on the torch which Plato took up.

But the reader will say: Why then does Euripides uphold the seer in the *Suppliants*? Is not this very inconsistent?

Inconsistent from our standpoint it may be, but hardly from that of one who is only groping his way to the truth.

There are two excellent explanations of the "inconsistency" which will readily occur to any one who will put himself in Euripides' place.

Firstly, although Theseus, as an "ideal," is only the mouthpiece of our poet himself, yet it is necessary to make even an ideal speak in character, and Euripides cannot shut his eyes to the fact that the seer had come down from the times in which Theseus (an historical character to him) was believed to have lived.

Secondly, and chiefly, the "inconsistency" explains itself through the uncertainty which hung over all matters connected with religion. We have said that in this matter Euripides handed on the torch to Plato. Between Euripides and Plato, however, there stands a man who was acknowledged by his own and later ages to have been "the wisest" of the Greeks, even Socrates, and Socrates, be it remembered, sincerely believed that he received the Divine guidance necessary for his life through the customary and traditional channels. Whatever, therefore, our iconoclast may have thought as to the "folly" of omens and oracles, he could not but pause and reflect that the best man he knew, a man endowed with an intellect keen as his own, did not despise such help either for himself or others. How and in what way Socrates accepted the help we shall see presently; meantime, it is sufficient for our present purpose to note the fact that he did accept it, as throwing a sidelight on the "inconsistency" of Euripides. We shall probably not be far from the truth if we conclude that what Euripides attacks is the abuse, not the right use of the traditional institutions.

**The Oracle.**—This conclusion will be strengthened if we study the remainder of the speech, in which Theseus is made to uphold signs and omens as a "benefit" to mortals.

The speech itself is addressed to Adrastus, king of Argos, leader of the disastrous expedition of the seven against Thebes. This expedition was undertaken, according to the tradition, at the entreaty of Polyneikes, son of the Theban Œdipus, who had married one of the daughters of Adrastus; but,



equally according to the tradition, it was persevered in against the express will of the gods, as revealed by Amphiaraus the seer, himself one of the seven princes who had united forces on the occasion. The result was that six out of the seven leaders, including Polyneikes, perished, whilst Amphiaraus himself was swallowed up by the earth.

In addition to this deliberate defiance of the gods, this thinking himself "stronger than God and wiser than the gods," Adrastus had committed another sin in giving his daughters in marriage to two evil-doers, Polyneikes of Thebes and Tydeus, son of Æneus, the wineman, king of Calydon in Ætolia. Both youths were fugitives from their native land—Polyneikes cursed by his father on account of his unfilial conduct, Tydeus laden with blood-guilt, the murder of his brother. Adrastus, nevertheless, had bestowed the hand of his daughters on these two men, ostensibly in obedience to an oracle of Apollo, which bade him "give them to the boar and the lion."

When pressed by Theseus to explain how he had interpreted this oracle, Adrastus relates that both youths had arrived in Argos on the same night, and that when they met together before his gates a violent quarrel had ensued between the two, and they had fought—"like wild beasts," interposes Theseus drily (*Suppl.*, 145), "and thou gavest thy daughters to these men!"

Adrastus is obliged to admit that so he had interpreted the command of Apollo, a confession which brings down upon him the severe reproof of Theseus. This is the sin of sins, he says—human thought seeking to be stronger than God, and human folly imagining itself wiser than the gods. "And to the number of these fools thou seemest to belong," he continues, addressing himself sternly to the Argive king (*Suppl.*, 219), "in that thou—at Phœbus' word, as though the gods did live—didst wed, indeed, thy daughters to these strangers, but hast (thereby) sorely wounded thine own house, dimmed and defiled its lustre, for never should the wise man mingle the innocent with the guilty."

The "innocent" are the daughters whom Adrastus has given to the "guilty" fugitives, and herein, according to Theseus, lies the sin which had primarily involved him and them in the fate of Polyneikes. And yet Adrastus defends himself by the plea that he took the step by the direction of Apollo. He sinned, then, by obeying the oracle; how is this new "inconsistency" to be explained?

The answer would seem to be this: in obeying the oracle Adrastus has failed to discover its true meaning. The commands of Loxias were notoriously "crooked," *i.e.* enigmatical, and Adrastus himself admits that the oracle was difficult of comprehension. "There came to me from Phœbus," he says, "a riddle hard to guess."

"All the more reason," replies Theseus in effect, "that you should have tried hard to decipher it. You took no trouble to do this, but gave your innocent daughters, your own flesh and blood, to two strangers, simply because they answered the description of the oracle by fighting 'like wild beasts'!"

This was the first sin of Adrastus. He professed to obey the oracle "as though gods lived," but really showed his contempt for it by taking no pains to arrive at its real meaning. In this connection we must bear in mind the manner in which the oracle concerning himself was received by Socrates. He tells in the *Apology* of the infinite pains which he took—the inquiry, extending over months and possibly years, he made—in order to discover its drift, and how at last he proved it to contain a meaning within a meaning. Xenophon also relates in the *Anabasis* how Socrates had blamed him for putting his own

interpretation on an oracle affecting himself and his career, without inquiring more earnestly into its real significance.

The second sin of Adrastus was, as we have seen, that although by his outward and superficial obedience to the oracle he professed his belief that "the gods did live," yet, directly the will of the gods ran counter to his wishes, he took his own way.

"Thou didst call all Argos to the war," says Theseus (*Suppl.*, 229), "and when warned by the seer didst bid defiance to the gods, and hast brought destruction on thy city."

The inference to be drawn from Euripides' handling of the story is then threefold.

Firstly, that every one is bound to use his judgment, and to obtain good counsel.

Secondly, that the Divine command can never be at variance with the right.

Thirdly, that, when once the Divine will has been clearly ascertained, it is to be obeyed at all hazards.

The teaching of the *Suppliants* on this subject is, in reality, therefore strictly in accordance with what we know of the mind of Socrates, "the wisest" of the Hellenes.

## V.—SIN, MISERY, IMPURITY

The origin and presence of evil, moral and physical, in the world seem to have been to thinkers of the ancient world a hard and terrible mystery. Euripides, as we already know, will not allow that the evil outweighs the good, but yet that evil is there is a fact not to be ignored.

It is not surprising that we should find opinions apparently contradictory as to the origin of moral evil set forth by our poet. In two passages which we have examined, he maintains that the evil is *in* men themselves, but that they endeavour to throw the onus of it upon the gods. "Thy *mind* was Kypris (lust)," says old Hekabē in the *Trojan Women*; and in the *Iphigenia in Tauris* the heroine remarks: "The people, themselves bloodthirsty, do but seek to throw their guilt upon the goddess."<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, as we have also seen in the *Hippolytus*, the guilt of a certain crime is represented as directly the work of Aphrodite, who compels her votary to sin.

In connection with this subject, the *Hippolytus* is of great interest, inasmuch as it presents us with both these doctrines of the origin of evil. Let us glance briefly at the outline of the story.

Hippolytus, the hero, is the son of Theseus, king of Athens, by the Amazon Antiope. He is brought up in Trœzene, and is one of the ingenuous, high-minded youths whom our poet delights in portraying. If in the *Ion* of Euripides we have a sort of foreshadowing of the cloistered recluse, and in his *Achilles* the picture of the brave and true knight, Hippolytus presents us with a mingling of both characters. He is a product of the new philosophic spirit; strives after purity of mind and body, to this end eschewing animal diet; is a follower of the master Orpheus, and burns incense at the shrine of many books. Hippolytus, however, has something better than book-learning, for he possesses that purity of heart which is innate, and which owes "nothing to teaching." And therefore, as he tells us in a singularly beautiful passage (see *Hipp.*, 952),

<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, p. 439.



he alone of mortals is allowed to pluck the blossoms from the unmown meadows sacred to Artemis (the garden of the chaste soul), where neither shepherd with his flock nor mower with his scythe dare tread; only the bee comes hovering over the flowers of spring in that fair region, which Innocence (*Aidōs*) watereth with her dews (*Hipp.*, 70 *et seq.*).

• This is the youth, then, who by his devotion to Artemis, with whom he hunts over hill and dale, has incurred the hatred of Aphrodite, who, as we have seen,<sup>1</sup> plots his ruin. To this end she contrives that Phædra, his father's young wife, shall see and fall in love with him. Phædra is no feather-brained Helen. As depicted by Euripides, she enlists our sympathy by the resolute stand which she makes against the fatal passion. For long she has striven to overcome it, and at length resolves to die rather than bring dishonour on her husband and her children. At this juncture the tempter appears in the shape of her old nurse, who worms out of her the secret of the love which is consuming her, and then persuades her by dint of the sophistical argument with which we are already familiar—the example of the gods—to give up the struggle. "Leave off this evil mind," says the nurse at the conclusion of a long speech (*Hipp.*, 473). "Desist from this presumption, for nothing less than presumption (*hybris* = wanton insult) is it even to *will* to be stronger than the gods," who themselves yield to sin.

The unhappy Phædra, weakened in body as well as mind, yields at length, although unwillingly, and in the absence of Theseus the nurse goes in search of Hippolytus, to whom she discloses the fatal secret after having extracted from him a solemn oath that he will not betray her. The agony of mind into which Hippolytus is plunged by the revelation is terrible. He is torn by conflicting emotions—on the one hand, filial duty bids him warn his father against what threatens his happiness; on the other, he is fettered and tied by his oath. It is in these circumstances that he exclaims: "The tongue hath sworn, but the *heart* remains unbound," words which were construed by the enemies of Euripides into a deliberate sanctioning of perjury.

Needless to say, nothing is farther from our poet's intention. Taken with the context, the meaning is evident. Hippolytus has indeed pledged his word, yet he did this in ignorance of what was to follow, a proposal, namely, from which his *heart* revolts. His tongue may be tied, but nothing can bind his heart, and the exclamation simply indicates that he is debating with himself whether under such circumstances it is lawful for him to keep silence.

Ultimately he resolves to say nothing to his father, whilst rejecting with the utmost contempt and scorn the overtures made to him.

Utterly degraded in her own eyes by the issue of the matter, and terrified lest Hippolytus should betray her, Phædra determines at once to forestall any such disclosure, and to be revenged. She conceives the plan of transferring to him the guilt of the infamous proposal which emanated from the nurse, and then hangs herself. Theseus returns home to find her dead. Clasped in her hand is a sealed tablet, on which is written the lie that accuses Hippolytus to his father.

Beside himself with grief at the loss of his wife and righteous indignation against the supposed transgressor, Theseus curses his son, and calls upon Poseidon (Neptune, god of the sea) to fulfil one of three wishes which he had promised to grant him, by destroying the youth that self-same day.

Hardly has the fatal wish been uttered when Hippolytus appears. He endeavours to defend himself, but the pure and good life to which he appeals in vindication of his character is denounced by Theseus as sheer hypocrisy.

<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, p. 446.

Even with banishment and death before him, the noble youth will not stoop to break his plighted word, and leaves the town silently, heartbroken, under his father's curse. The sea god fulfils the latter by causing a monster to rise out of the waves suddenly before the chariot of Hippolytus as he drives along the shore. The horses take fright, their master is thrown out of the chariot, dashed against the rocks, trampled on by his own steeds, and brought back dying, to breathe his last in his native city. His patron, Artemis, now at length appears, and reproaches Theseus with what he has done.

Without seeking for proofs, she says, without consulting the seer, without awaiting the test of time, he has, in a fit of passion, murdered the noblest of men, his own son. So far Theseus has done wrong. Nevertheless, both he and Phædra are absolved by the goddess from the guilt of their actions.

"That belongs to Aphrodite." "Thou didst destroy him unconditionally," she says (*Hipp.*, 1433), "for when it is given them from the gods, men sin naturally."

This, then, is one way of explaining the presence of evil: men sin because it is so destined by the gods. Does this hideous fatality, this imperative of evil, represent the real mind of Euripides?

Fortunately, we have in the very same drama two proofs to the contrary.

(1) In the first place, Euripides gives another explanation of the matter, and this is put into the mouth of the unhappy Phædra. She utters it in the time of her comparative innocence, when she is beginning indeed to grow weary of the long struggle with self, but has not yet actually yielded to the temptation.

"Often," she says (*Hipp.*, 375 *et seq.*), "I have meditated during the long nights and pondered upon this—how it is that the lives of mortals are ruined. To me," she continues, "men do not seem to do evil from the nature of their minds (their mental constitution), for many think well and rightly. The matter must be considered thus: We understand and know indeed the right (*ta chrēsta*, that which is really best for us), but *we do not work it out* (*ouk eponoumen de*)—some by reason of slothfulness, others because they choose some pleasure instead of what is noble (*tou kalou*)."

The "pleasures" which Phædra goes on to enumerate are those which destroy a noble soul by simply frittering away its powers: (1) *Love of society* (literally, a prolonged gossiping, lounging sort of club-life—*makrai leschai*); (2) *leisure a sweet evil* (really lack of wholesome occupation and incentive to work); and finally (3) the *aidōs* itself, says our poet—that ideal of every true Hellene—may keep the soul from pursuing the noble. How so? Because there are two qualities bearing the honoured name—one *aidōs* by no means evil, that good shame, that reverence for God and for others which we know so well from Homer; the other, a plague to the house, *i.e.* the false shame, the undue modesty, which keeps a man from putting forth his powers—in a word, from effort.

The sense of the passage is, then, that people err from the right path not from ignorance but from a certain slothfulness of mind which bids them prefer a life of luxurious ease and leisure to a life of noble endeavour (*to kalon*).

As we shall see presently, this doctrine is the reverse of that held by Socrates, who maintained that men err because they do *not* know the right—*ta chrēsta*, what is best for them. Phædra, however, is in no doubt about the matter. She does not sin in ignorance. She knows perfectly well that what she is about to do will bring ruin on herself, dishonour to her husband and children.<sup>1</sup> "My hands are clean," she says, adding with deep meaning,

<sup>1</sup> See the whole speech of Phædra (373 *et seq.*).



"a stain (*miasma*) is on my soul." And again, when the nurse's suit has been rejected, Phædra exclaims (*Hipp.*, 317): "My punishment hath found me." Nor is she alone in this insight into the real state of the case, for the women of Trœzene, who form the chorus (*Hipp.*, 672), also detect the specious nature of the nurse's reasoning, and warn her against it, applauding her resolve to die rather than yield to dishonour.

And yet—Phædra yields. Why? Out of that "slothfulness" of the soul which she allows to creep over her and lull into slumber the effort after the noble. Phædra has ceased to resist.

The real explanation of the fall of Phædra is then, according to our poet, to be sought for in the combination of two factors, the one within, the other without. Within is the "slothfulness" which enervates the soul so that it succumbs to the tempter from without.<sup>1</sup>

(2) **General Tendency of the Drama.**—"Ah, but," says the reader, "you forget—Phædra cannot help herself. She must yield to the compulsion of Aphrodite."

Must she? Then how do we account for the successful resistance of Hippolytus? The imperative of evil has no power over him. Hippolytus resists unto the death—resists evil not only in the shape of lust, but in the shape of perjury. Rather than yield to lust, he incurs the revengeful hatred of Phædra—rather than break his oath, he loses, first, as a banished man, everything in life, then life itself.

Artemis, indeed, declares that there is a "must," that men must sin because it is their destiny; but Artemis, be it remembered, is to our iconoclast no Divinity to be blindly worshipped. She is only one of the *dramatis personæ*, whose opinions he states but is not compelled to endorse. No isolated sentiment gives the real mind of Euripides. That, as we have repeatedly pointed out, must be sought for in the context and the whole tendency of the drama. Now the tendency of the *Hippolytus* makes for righteousness, and the character of Hippolytus is the key to it. Hippolytus resists the "must" to which Phædra yields—the one has the innate energy of soul which overcomes, the other the slothfulness which succumbs.<sup>2</sup>

The Hippolytus of Euripides is, in fact, like the Antigone of Sophocles, a martyr in the cause of righteousness.

To this Artemis bears witness. "O unhappy one!" she exclaims (*Hipp.*, 1389), "into what misery hast thou fallen! Thy nobleness of soul hath wrought thy destruction." And Hippolytus himself, conscious of the purity of his intentions, appeals to the All-Father (*ibid.*, 1363). "Zeus, Zeus," he cries, when carried back to die, "seest thou this—that I, the innocent, who feared the gods, and strove after wisdom more than all, must sink forsaken and abandoned, beneath the earth to Hades? In vain have I distressed myself, and laboured to do righteously towards men!"

Is not this the very complaint of the Hebrew psalmist? (Ps. lxxiii. 13, 14-16): "Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency. For all the day long have I been plagued and chastened every morning . . . when I thought to understand this, it was too painful for me."

<sup>1</sup> This double factor in the working out of evil seems also to be implied in the *Medeia*. The heroine says (1013), in view of the awful revenge which she means to take upon Jason: "Dire necessity compels me, for these things the gods and my own evil thoughts have brought upon me." *Medeia* rightly places her "own evil thoughts" as an impelling factor in line with the gods, i.e. she is conscious of free-will.

<sup>2</sup> The nobility of Phædra is indeed praised by Artemis, but this is in reference to her struggle with self. She is said to have fallen unwillingly through the deceit of Kypria, the nurse (1300).

Nevertheless the fate of Hippolytus does not, any more than the complaint of the Hebrew, betoken the triumph of evil. The reverse is the case—not only in the drama of Euripides, but in the popular tradition on which the drama is based. In the drama Artemis promises that (*Hipp.*, 1422 *et seq.*), in requital for all his sufferings, Hippolytus shall enjoy the greatest honours in his native land; the maidens of Troezenia shall in time to come dedicate to him before their marriage a lock of hair, shed their tears in memory of his sacrifice, and keep alive his fame in their songs, customs all of which existed from time immemorial down to the days of our poet. This, then, is the full triumph of the good, as measured by the Hellenic standard; the example of the youth who dies rather than forswear himself has remained for generations a bright onward beckoning star to all noble souls, and Hippolytus himself has received that meed of honour for which every true Hellene thirsted—unfading glory.

**The Christian and the Pagan Conception of Sin.**—In this recognition of the tempter from within, it may be thought that Euripides contradicts the doctrine laid down in the *Trojan Women*: “Thy mind was Kypris.” Such a “contradiction” is, however, perfectly in accordance with the experience of human life. Who does not know that evil presents itself as a double factor, now in subjective, now in objective form? The “contradiction” is, moreover, expressly recognised by the Christian doctrine concerning sin and moral evil—on the one hand, evil is said by the founder of our religion to be within—to grow from the heart as naturally as fruit from a tree.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, the same authority points to the seducer from without (St. Luke xx. 31): “Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.”

The vital difference between the Christian and the pagan conception of sin lies of course in the attitude of God towards moral evil. The Christian believer knows that God is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, that He hates and abhors it; hence he enters upon the struggle against it in the full confidence that the greatest power in the universe is on his side, and will ultimately give him the victory.

The Hellene of the age of Euripides, on the contrary, is just beginning to discern that God and PURITY must be synonymous terms; his eyes are just being opened to the real character of the deities of tradition; the evil that exists he still ascribes to gods who are still, in his belief, *partially* good and beneficent. Hence the hopeless confusion—from the so-called good proceeds the evil and the misery, a misery which is intensified to the sufferer by the notion that the All-Father is perfectly indifferent to his suffering. Hippolytus cries in his dying agony: “Zeus, see’st thou this, that I, the innocent, must perish?” But Artemis has just said to Theseus that Zeus himself has prevented her from saving Hippolytus, inasmuch as he will not allow his children (the gods) to interfere with one another. Zeus, the father of men as well as of gods, looks calmly on and compels Artemis to stand aside whilst Hippolytus is done to death by the vindictive malice of Aphrodite.

Ultimately, as we have seen, the good triumphs, but it is through its own inherent force, not through any help vouchsafed in the struggle by the gods of tradition.

The indifference to the fate of mortals shown by the gods of tradition is another of the moral puzzles which perplexed the nobler-minded amongst the Greeks. In Euripides it occurs again and again; the very passage which we

<sup>1</sup> St. Matt. xii. 33; St. Luke vi. 44.



have cited as proof of a belief in a personal God, conveys also the prevailing sense of dread lest that God should not concern Himself about His creatures: "It is a grief and care to me—*melei, melei moi*"—says the chorus of Trojan captives (Tro., 1077), "*whether Thou, O King, who hast set Thy throne in æther, thinkest upon us,*" and the destruction of our city. In this sense also must be construed the words of Talthybius, the Greek herald, when he finds Hecabē, former queen of Troy, prone upon the ground, bereft of husband and children, herself a slave—"O Zeus!" he exclaims (*Hek.*, 488), "what shall I say? Dost thou indeed look down on men, or is it a vain delusion? Is it blind chance that ruleth all affairs of mortals?"

The destruction of Troy was, indeed, as we have seen, regarded universally, from Homer downwards, as a moral necessity on account of the sin of Paris. The perplexity betrayed both by the captives and the Greek herald was as to whether the supreme God felt any compassion, whether He cared for the suffering which had overwhelmed the innocent and the guilty alike.

The doubt on this vital point naturally engendered a feeling of reckless defiance, which is well set forth by our poet in the drama which takes for its subject the *Madness of Heracles*.

The hero, as we know (*Her. Main.*, 20), had given up his life to deeds of beneficence in fulfilling his mission as "humaniser of the earth." The rage of Hera against him, however, knows no abatement, and she finally sends upon him the fit of madness in which he slays unconsciously his own wife and children, his reputed father Zeus meantime standing aloof and leaving him to his fate. Who can wonder that Heracles in the bitterness of his soul disowns (*Her. Main.*, 1263) "this Zeus, whosoever he may be," and vows that he prefers Amphitryon, a mortal and one who loves him, to such a father? In his agony and shame he determines to put an end to his life.

"Thinkest thou that the gods care aught for thy threats?" says his friend Theseus (*Her. Main.*, 1242).

"God is unfeeling," rejoins the wretched man, "*and I will be the same to the gods.*"

"Keep silence!" implores Theseus, "lest for thy big words worse suffering come upon thee."

Another example of the same kind occurs in the *Phœnician Women*, and is put into the mouth of the unselfish Antigone. When Œdipus, in the extremity of their misery, bids her make supplications at the altars, she replies, "The gods have had enough<sup>1</sup> of my troubles, *i.e.* the gods are tired of me."

The great chasm that existed between immortal and mortal tended, then, to widen in the days of Euripides, and there was none to bridge it over. It is the sense of despair and injustice that extorts the cry from the pagan martyr, Hippolytus, "Oh, that a mortal might curse the gods!" True, Artemis appears to console Hippolytus, as we have seen. But Artemis leaves him to die—she cannot defile her purity by contact with the dead. Hippolytus is still alone in the last struggle, still has the fearful knowledge that he has been betrayed by one god, Aphrodite, and thrown over by another, Zeus.

Contrast with this the confidence of the first Christian martyr: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." The Greek knows himself to have been abandoned in the struggle against evil, the Hebrew sees in vision his Lord rising up for his defence, and has for consolation the true Word: "Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world."

We must now hasten on to call attention, however briefly, to certain noticeable points in the conceptions of Euripides as regards sin.

<sup>1</sup> *Koron* = a surfeit.

(1) **Moral Purity.**—There is a remarkable deepening of the sense of moral purity. The old idea of impurity as contracted by outward contact no longer suffices. We have seen one instance of this in the lament of Phædra: "My hands are clean—the stain is *on my soul*." A similar distinction is drawn in the *Orestes* (1604), where, when Menelaus says disdainfully to the hero, "*I have pure hands*," the latter retorts, in reference to his uncle's selfishness and secret ambition: "Yes, but not a pure mind."

Everywhere in Euripides the inward verity and the mere outward appearance are placed in sharp relief.

(2) **The Consequences of Sin.**—The fact that the consequences of evil cannot be confined to the individual who commits it is often insisted upon by our poet. Thus, in the *Orestes* (980, 985, 1545-1549), the misery or "fate" of the house of Athens is distinctly ascribed to the sin of Pelops, its founder, who treacherously slew the charioteer Myrtilus. On this account the curse has settled upon his descendants. In the *Iphigenia in Tauris* (195) the same belief is expressed, but here the avenging spirit comes by reason of the later sins of the race. The descendants of Pelops inherit the taint, and still further develop it.

In thus recognising a moral penalty—the inherited tendency to vice—Euripides follows his great predecessors, as he does also in his general treatment of the causes of the Trojan War. That war "fulfilled the purposes of the gods," as we have seen, and the chief of these purposes was the chastisement of Paris, the adulterer and deceiver of his guest-friend. This chastisement, however, could not be confined to Paris alone, his family and race were involved in it. So in the *Hecabē* the chorus (*Hec.*, 629) bewails that "through the *jolly of one man* there had come upon the Trojans a *common evil*."

Thus the Christian doctrine of the solidarity of the human race—the fact that it was possible for "sin to enter into the world by one man"—was by no means a new or unfamiliar thought to the Hellene any more than to the Hebrew.

*Sin an evil in itself.*—Finally we may note a passing anticipation of a great truth, namely, that the evil which besets the soul is a *calamity* equally with any evil that can happen to the body. The passage referred to is placed most happily in the mouth of a slave—a member, that is, of the class which experienced to the full the most terrible evils of life. The speaker is the same faithful retainer who, in the *Helen*, expresses his conviction that sound judgment and good counsel are the best soothsayers. The old man is not ashamed of being a slave: "May it be mine," he says (*Hel.*, 728), "although servitude is my lot, to be numbered in the company of noble slaves. If I have not the free *name*, may I have the free *soul*! For this is better than to be possessed of two evils—to have an evil mind and be in bondage to one's neighbour."

Here we have at least the germ of the idea which was so grandly worked out by Socrates and Plato. That evil mind which Euripides places as a calamity on an equality with slavery of the body came to be regarded by the greatest thinkers of antiquity as "slavery of the soul" and as something infinitely worse than any physical or political bondage—a development which reached its climax in Christianity.

## VI.—THE GREAT UNWRITTEN LAWS

We have already seen so fully (through Sophocles) the recognition of the great unwritten laws in the classical age of Greece, that nothing more will



be necessary here than a few brief notes. These will suffice to show that to Euripides, as to Sophocles, human society appears to be permeated by the sense of certain mutual obligations, and that these obligations equally appear to rest on a religious basis.

**I. The Honour due to the Gods.**—Whatever the private opinions of Euripides may have been as regards the gods of tradition, there is abundant evidence that both he and his countrymen associated the prosperity of their city with her reverence for an unseen power. Euripides is a fervent patriot, but his highest and sincerest praise of Athens is that she honours God by observing the great laws, *i.e.* the laws regarding the defenceless, the suppliant, the weak, the dead.

"Thou walkest in a just path, O my country, in that thou honourest the gods. Mayest thou never depart from it!" says the chorus of Athenians in the *Heracleidæ* (901). "He who contesteth this rusheth hard on madness. We have seen the proof of it, for God Himself giveth the warning, who ever casteth down the proud in the imagination of their hearts."

The particular instance of "honouring the gods" here referred to is the succour given by the Athenians to helpless suppliants, the mother and infant sons of Heracles. Their persecutor, Eurystheus, had gone out against them, "thinking," as the poet quaintly puts it (*Her.*, 933), "of greater things than justice;" hence he is defeated in battle; overthrown in the pride of his heart.

Again, when the Athenians, true to a noble feeling, will not slay this same Eurystheus after he is a captive and defenceless in their hands, Eurystheus himself testifies (*Her.*, 1010) of them, that in sparing his life they had "far more regard to God than to their enmity" against him, which they might have gratified on the spot.

The connection between the gods and another law of Hellas—that of the honour (burial-rites) due to the dead—is beautifully shown in the *Suppliants*. Here Æthra, the mother of Theseus, when she exhorts him to take up arms in order to recover the bodies of the princes who have fallen in the war of the seven against Thebes, bases her appeal on the honour due to the gods.

"First of all, my son," she says (*Hik.*, 299), "I bid thee consider the reverence due unto the gods, lest by dishonouring them thou fall. For fall thou shalt *by this alone*, though wise in other things." She urges him to go up against those who are overthrowing "the customs (*nomima*) of all Hellas; for this it is," she adds, "that holdeth together the cities of men, even the observance of the laws (*nomous*)." Here the connection between the gods, the laws, and the customs which are the outward part of the laws, is very close.

Theseus replies that his mother has but forestalled his own intention. He will go up against the Thebans, but not in the strength of his own arm; "One thing I need," he says (*Hik.*, 593), "the gods who guard the right. If they fight with me they give the victory. For naught doth courage (*aretē*) avail to mortals if God be not on their side." Theseus, be it remembered, is our poet's type of manliness. The feeling here attributed to him is certainly that which, according to Herodotus, won the day at Marathon, at Salamis, at Plateæ.

**II. The Honour due to Parents.**—Nowhere does the simple, genuine, old-world piety of Hellas find recognition so amply as in the scenes of family life in Euripides. It is not, however, the father so much as the mother around whom the love of the children centres. This may appear strange to us with our preconceived notions of the *patria potestas* and the inferior position assigned to women among the Greeks. Nevertheless, any one who will take the trouble to go carefully through the pages of Euripides can verify the fact for himself. Let us look briefly at one instance ready to our hand.

We have just heard the warning addressed to Theseus of Athens by his aged mother Æthra. She speaks it in fear and trembling; but necessity is upon her, and speak she must. "I will not keep silence," she says, "lest some day I should blame myself for being silent—for holding my peace, like a coward. Nor, through the fear that good words from women's lips bear little fruit, will I abstain from this my duty (*toumon kalon*)." Then follows the warning, "I bid thee first of all, O son, consider the reverence due unto the gods," and so forth.

The admonition, be it remembered, is addressed to a king, a warrior and hero of renown, and a man of mature age. And not in private is it spoken, but at the reception of a public embassy before the Temple of Demeter at Eleusis in the presence of another monarch, Adrastus of Argos, and a crowd of royal suppliants with their attendants.

How, then, does Theseus, the old-world type of duty and of chivalry, receive it?

With the utmost respect. Even before Æthra summons up courage to let her voice be heard in public, he encourages her by the remark that "many a word of wisdom has, ere this, come from the lips of women." Now he proceeds to reassure her, as we have seen, by disclosing his own real intent and purpose. He will only take counsel beforehand with his people, as is right and fitting, and when he has won them over to his own views he will at once set out upon the expedition to which she urges him. First, however, he must see his mother safely to her home. "Now," he says to the royal suppliants, "remove these sacred olive-boughs" (which they had offered to Æthra as suppliants for her intercessions), "that I may take by her dear hand my mother and lead her to my father's house. Miserable, indeed, is that son who doth not requite his parents, and in return serve them (*antidouleuei*, slave for them as they have slaved for him) noblest of services! For he that rendereth this to them receiveth from his children that which he himself hath given."

Have we not here the Hellenic equivalent to the Hebrew "commandment with promise"?

The duty of the requiting of parents is also set forth in that most touching of the many touching episodes in Euripides (*Iph. Aul.*, 1220 *seq.*), the scene in which Iphigenia pleads with her father for her life.

There is no need, however, for us to enlarge further at present upon this subject, inasmuch as love in all its manifold shapes will meet us again amongst our poet's ideals.

Here we would only point out that the episode in the *Alcestis* where Admetus upbraids his old father and mother because they will not consent to die instead of him, is simply a burlesque of the real state of feeling among the Greeks. Admetus declaims against his parents' "selfishness" much as, in our own day, the new woman is made to run full tilt against existing institutions and the "old order" in general. The egotism of Admetus, carried to the verge of the ludicrous, is evidently a hit at "Young Athens" and its presumption.

**III. The Marriage Bond.**—Before proceeding to investigate our poet's treatment of this law we must first consider the position which he takes up relating to women in general. This is rendered necessary by the fact that Euripides is commonly regarded and described as, emphatically, a "woman-hater." To this term we must take exception *in toto*. That it could have been applied to the man who has drawn the noblest and sweetest female characters in the whole range of Greek literature, who has painted an *Alcestis*, an *Iphigenia*, a *Macaria*, an *Andromache*, a *Polyxena*—would pass comprehension, were it not for that most unfair habit to which we have already called attention



(p. 431) of judging our poet by isolated sentiments picked out at random without regard to the context or the circumstances under which they are uttered. Far from being a misogynist, Euripides is the reverse.

The name is certainly applicable to his Hippolytus, who pronounces the severest diatribe against the sex—but under what compulsion? The most terrible provocation to which a pure and high-minded youth could be subjected (see *ante*, p. 455).

Hippolytus goes the length of wishing that women could be improved off the face of the earth. Why has Zeus given this “deceitful evil” to dwell with men? he asks. If he had a mind to create a race of mortals, why did he not give children to men direct from his own hand in exchange for, and to the value of, gold, iron, or bronze weighed out in his temple? Then, indeed, might men have dwelt at home in freedom from this race of womankind, a race so detestable that their own fathers willingly pay a heavy dower to be rid of them. The only passable women are the stupid ones. They are certainly lazy and good-for-nothing, but at least their lack of wit prevents them planning evil.

Such is an outline of the famous tirade of Hippolytus. Let us examine it, and see how much belongs to the hero, and how much (if any) to Euripides himself.

(1) *Woman as a “deceitful evil.”*—Here Hippolytus is quoting Hesiod. Our hero is represented elsewhere as a great lover of books, and the “deceitful evil” is a reference to one Hesiodic fable (that of Pandora), whilst the children whose worth is estimated in “gold, bronze, and iron” is a reminiscence of another (the Four Ages). Hippolytus is, therefore, simply speaking “in character” as a bookworm.

(2) *Fathers eager to be rid of their daughters.*—Is it Hippolytus the misogynist who speaks here, or Euripides himself? Let another picture drawn by our poet answer for him—that of the aged Iphis in the *Suppliants*, as he mourns for his daughter. Evadne has thrown herself on the funeral pyre of her husband, Capaneus, determined to die with him, and Iphis, who has come to Athens in search of her, must return to Argos—alone. Listen to his lament: If he had but his life to live over again, he says, never would he seek to possess children, for now he knows what it is to lose them. What shall he do, miserable, lonely old man? “Go home?” he asks, “to find all desolate, my life without resource, bereft of joy! Or shall I turn to *his* house, the home of Capaneus, my son-in-law, once so sweet to me, when she, my child, still lived? Now she is no more—she whose sweet mouth ever sought the old man’s cheeks, whose hands were clasped round this old head. A father in his old age,” so testifies Iphis (*Hik.*, 1094), “hath nothing dearer than a daughter. The souls of men may, indeed, be larger (according to the popular notion), yet are they *smaller* in sweetness of caressing love. Come, take me home, and leave me in the darkness—there let this aged body pine away, unnourished.”

Here, at least, is one father whose sentiments in regard to his daughter are not those of Hippolytus, and yet have an equal claim to be regarded as those of Euripides himself. Hippolytus, the youth, is simply drawing on his imagination—Iphis, the grey old man, on his experience.

(3) *“Stupid women are the only good ones.”*—Does this opinion belong to the misogynist Hippolytus or to his creator Euripides? Let the scene between Theseus and Æthra, which we have already witnessed, answer. “Many a word of wisdom hath ere now fallen from women’s lips.” Here speaks again the word of experience.

(4) To sum up:—Taking the speech of Hippolytus as a whole, it must be regarded, in its sweeping censures of the female sex, as an example of the *agan*,

that "too-much" which the sober judgment of the Greeks condemned. In his wrath and indignation Hippolytus goes too far. He does not confine his strictures to the one wicked woman before him (the nurse) and her misguided mistress, but attacks women in general. The excessive energy of his denunciations is, as it were, dramatically necessary from the Greek standpoint in order to explain how it is that he has incurred the hatred of Aphrodite. If all men were misogynists, human society and its exponent, the State, would naturally come to an end. Hence, Hippolytus—although pure, noble, and innocent—yet brings upon himself, so far, his fate.

The whole speech is necessitated by the legend on which Euripides worked, and must not be taken as expressing the opinions of the poet himself. Hippolytus is simply speaking throughout on the lines laid down by the old myth.

A somewhat similar sentiment, again, is repeated in the *Medeia* (573), where Jason also wishes that men could rid themselves of the "evil" of woman. Jason, however, be it remembered, is a coward and an ingrate. He has basely thrown overboard the woman who had sacrificed all for him, and so has brought upon himself the evil which he denounces. He is fitly answered by the chorus, who represent the real mind of the poet (576):—

"Jason, with fine words, indeed, thou trickest out thy speech; but to me thou seem'st—and this I'll say, even though it be against thy mind—to act unjustly, in that thou hast betrayed thy wife."

In both cases, then, the dramatic situation explains and necessitates the outburst.

The truth is that Euripides was incapable of taking deliberately a one-sided view of any social question, and on this particular subject there are numerous proofs that he possessed abundance of practical common sense, and tried to hold the balance fairly. For example, in the *Hecabē* (1183), when the old queen has visited the Thracian Polymestor with a punishment from the Greek standpoint is perfectly righteous,<sup>1</sup> and the wretched man inveighs against women as a hateful race, "the like of which is not to be found in earth or sea;" the chorus calmly makes answer as follows, "Be not overbold of tongue, nor visit thine own sins on the whole female sex. Many of us, indeed, deserve to be hated, but the number of good women outweighs the bad," a commonplace conclusion which would hardly merit comment were it not for the popular notion that credits Euripides with opinions to the contrary. So far is our poet from being blind to the good qualities of women that he even goes out of his way to find reasons strong enough to account for any deviation from the right path. His own standard for women is a high one. When a woman falls from this, there must, in his judgment, be something behind, which the world does not know. Thus his Clytemnestra, when defending herself to Electra, says (1038), "*Our sin* (the sin of women) immediately becomes notorious, but those who are the *causes* of it—our husbands—to them no blame is attached."<sup>2</sup> And what the poet means by this he shows not only in the *Electra* but in the *Iphigenia in Aulis*, where he makes Clytemnestra unfold the wrongs which she has suffered at the hands of Agamemnon—an awful family history, quite sufficient of itself to goad a high-spirited woman to desperation, without the (traditional) insults added later. "Clytemnestra," Euripides seems to say, "is a bad woman, but one

<sup>1</sup> Polymestor had betrayed a sacred trust, and murdered her son for the sake of his gold.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. a passage in the *Ion* (1090) where the chorus complain of the readiness of the poets to censure *women*, whilst passing over the sins of *men*, who are in reality more faithless than the opposite sex. So at least affirm the women, and Euripides gives expression to their belief.



who has been forced into badness." And he invents for her a past which must have made his hearers wonder—not that the wife of Agamemnon was a fierce and bitter woman, but that she could have had a grain of womanly feeling left. Agamemnon is the slayer of her first husband and the murderer of her first-born; she has been compelled by her own father to accept this man as her second husband, and yet she has striven to conceal her repugnance to him, and to be a good wife and mother, until his conduct in regard to Iphigenia at length turns the scale. The Clytemnestra of Euripides is, therefore, far more sinned against than sinning. In her case, as in that of Medeia, the sympathy of the poet is enlisted on the side of the outraged wife and mother. If Euripides had been a woman-hater, would he have taken the pains to elaborate in this fashion the history of the typical "ruthless wife" of antiquity? We trow not, for he tells the story in such a way that his audience detests—not Clytemnestra, but—Agamemnon, the "cause" of her badness.

Such are some of the negative proofs that our poet was no despiser of women. It would be easy to multiply them, but our space has its limits, and we must refer the reader to the abundance of positive evidence supplied by the portraits of noble, high-minded women which will meet us when we come to consider his ideals.

Turning now to our immediate subject, we have to ask whether Euripides made light of the marriage bond, or whether he treated it as something sacred and indissoluble. Our poet leaves us in no doubt as to his mind on the subject. If he can trace up effect to cause in the case of a Clytemnestra, he does not attempt to palliate her sin. Nor has he the slightest sympathy with wickedness self-chosen—witness his treatment of the story of Helen. The beautiful woman whose "mind was wantonness," who leaves her husband's home from love of luxury, despising its simplicity, is to him "no daughter of Zeus"—that is, of a god, whatever tradition may affirm. The thing is morally impossible. Such a woman is "loathed by the gods," hated by Greeks and Trojans alike. The consequences of her sin, the misery which it entailed, are described over and over again, in drama after drama, with a persistence which is not only an index to the popular feeling on the subject, but may fairly be taken as expressing the poet's own mind. It was "the hateful marriage of Paris that brought destruction on the citadel of Troy," says Andromache in the *Trojan Women* (598), as she describes the horrors of the scene—the woes upon woes heaped on the hapless people—their city lying in ruins, vultures preying on the dead before the sacred temple of Athena—the yoke of slavery that has fallen upon all. And the chorus of captives re-echoes the same truth in the words (*Tro.*, 780):—

"Ah, wretched Troy! thou hast lost thousands through the hateful marriage of *one* woman."

Elsewhere (*Hec.*, 948) the union of Helen and Paris is described as "a marriage that was no marriage," but an evil wrought by the *alastōr*, some revengeful spirit bent on the destruction of the race.

In Clytemnestra and Helen, then, the poet exhibits the sin of unfaithfulness to the Marriage bond in *women*. Let us now see whether he is disposed to pass the same sin over lightly when it shows itself in *men*. The search will be easy, as his grandest tragedy, the *Medeia*, is devoted to this very subject.

*Medeia and Jason*.—The drama is founded on the old story of the voyage made in the Argo by Jason and his comrades to Colchis on the Black Sea in quest of the Golden Fleece. The expedition has been planned by the hero's uncle, Pelias, king of Iolkos in Thessaly, in order to rid himself of his nephew,

the rightful heir to the throne, who, he fondly imagines, will never return alive.<sup>1</sup> Jason, however, does survive; he overcomes the perils of the enterprise, and carries off the Golden Fleece by the assistance of the daughter of Æetes, the king of the land, Medeia, who has fallen in love with him, and helps him by her magic powers to perform all the impossible tasks set him by her father. Jason promises to make her his wife, and the two escape together in the Argo. Æetes goes after the fugitives, and has nearly reached them when, in order to divert him from the pursuit, Medeia cuts in pieces her own brother, and throws his limbs before the father, thereby gaining time for Jason. Safely arrived in Iolkos, Jason meditates on plans of vengeance against King Pelias, who had slain his parents, and now keeps the crown from himself; and Medeia takes part in the revenge, for she persuades the daughters of Pelias to slay their father. Finally, both she and Jason are obliged to flee to escape the avengers of blood, the near relatives of the murdered man. They take refuge in Corinth, where, finally, Jason, to secure for himself safety and the crown which he covets, is minded to wed the daughter of Kreon the Corinthian king, and to cast off Medeia. At this juncture the drama opens, and the unfortunate woman comes before us in all the new-felt horrors of her position. Medeia's hands are not pure—she has committed one murder, and instigated another. Both crimes have been perpetrated out of love to Jason, and they have barred the way against her returning either to her own or her husband's native land. Medeia stands absolutely alone in the world—brother, father, fatherland exist for her only in the one man, Jason, who coolly throws her overboard as soon as he finds her presence inconvenient. Not only does Jason propose to wed the daughter of Kreon, but he acquiesces in the intention of that monarch to banish Medeia, who has been overheard to use threatening language against himself and the princess. The woman who has sacrificed all for Jason is to be thrust out—not only, as the despised wife, from her rightful place in his heart, but “as a beggar” from her only secure asylum. Jason, therefore, intends to commit not only the sin against the marriage vow, but the sin against the guest-friend who had saved his life.

What cares Jason? He cynically tells Medeia that he has given to her much more than she had ever bestowed on him, “for now,” he says (535 *et seq.*), “thou dwell'st in Hellas instead of in a barbarian land, and hast learned to know justice and to obey the laws instead of the might of force. Moreover,” he adds, “all men know thee to be wise, and thou possessest GLORY; whereas, if thou hadst dwelt in the far corners of the earth, no one would have made mention of thee. As for me, I care not to have wealth at home, nor yet to out-do Orpheus in his melodies, if therewith I win not distinction.”

One can imagine the effect of this speech on Medeia—to talk of justice and laws to *her*, the wrongfully cast-off wife!—to cajole her at whom all will shortly laugh with the idea of glory!—to speak of distinction for himself to the one who had brought him whatever distinction he possessed! No wonder that the chorus takes up Medeia's cause, and tells Jason (576) that, however much he may trick out his speech with fine arguments and endeavour to deceive himself, “to me thou seem'st (and this I'll say e'en though it be against thy mind) to act unjustly in that thou hast betrayed thy wife.”

In her agony and despair, Medeia plans the most awful revenge that ever entered the heart of woman to conceive. The love which she had felt for the ingrate has turned into a hatred equally intense. Jason's deliberate preference of another woman, his selfish concern for his own safety, his black

<sup>1</sup> See our companion volume for the details of the legend.



ingratitude, above all his cynical attitude towards herself as the "barbarian," the foreigner, sting Medeia beyond endurance, and she determines to wound the author of her misery in his most vulnerable point. Jason has abandoned her and her children to secure the throne of Corinth, and heirs to that throne. He shall have neither; nor shall he retain even those children who are part of herself, the children of the foreign mother, whom he intends to bring up as an appanage to the children of the Greek mother. Medeia's children shall not pay court to the children of her rival. That rival must die; the children must die also, lest, on the one hand, vengeance be wreaked upon them, lest, on the other, Jason should find solatium in them.

Medeia is torn by conflicting emotions—the jealousy of the outraged wife and the passionate love of the mother alternately strive for the mastery. In the end jealousy triumphs. Medeia sends her rival a poisoned robe, emblem of adulterous love, the same symbol which Deianeira sends to Heracles.<sup>1</sup> The maiden, naught suspecting, puts it on, and is consumed alive—a fate which is shared by her father, who, whilst endeavouring to tear the burning robe from off his daughter, is himself caught by it and destroyed. Medeia then slays her two sons and escapes through the air, leaving Jason to experience the misery of that bitterness, the utter loneliness, the childless, dishonoured old age which he had designed for her. He finally meets his end by the falling in upon him of the Argo, as he sits in her shade—meet emblem of his base ingratitude.

Into the tragic merits of the play we cannot enter here. No criticism could convey an adequate impression of Medeia's self-revelation. To secure that, the drama itself must be read. We are only concerned with it here in its relation to the great unwritten law of marriage as affecting the *man*. From this standpoint two things should be noted:—

(1) That, so far as the plighted troth between the two is concerned, Medeia stands under the protection of the divine powers. There can be no doubt as to the views of Euripides on this point. After reproaching Jason with all that she has done and suffered for him, Medeia says (488): "And this thou hast experienced from me, and yet thou hast betrayed me, hast taken to thyself another wife, although thou art possess of children. If thou wert childless, I could forgive thee this new love, but now!—Gone is the truth of the oaths. Verily, thou seem'st to think THE GODS no longer rule—that amongst men NEW LAWS exist—for in thine own self thou knowest that thou hast not kept thy plighted troth to me." Medeia means that, if Jason had had the fear of the gods before his eyes, he would never have broken the old law of the covenant which had made them man and wife together in the sight of God and men. And herself strong in the belief that the gods do live, that the old law still prevails, Medeia plans her terrible revenge. She is not an innocent woman; her hands are stained with blood. Nevertheless, as regards Jason, she is guiltless; she has been true to him and to the marriage vow, and *therefore*, she believes, the gods are on her side (*Med.*, 160). She can confidently appeal to Themis (Divine Law)<sup>2</sup> and to Artemis (Purity), and remind them of what she is suffering—how Jason has broken the great oaths wherewith she had bound him. "Hark!" says the old nurse (*ibid.*, 168), "how she cries to Themis the avenger, and Zeus who watches over the oaths of mortals! 'Tis no slight thing that will make my mistress to desist from anger."

And after Medeia has worked out her fearful plan, her defence to Jason is (1372): "*The gods know who began this;*" and again, when he in his turn

<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, p. 393.

<sup>2</sup> Here (208) represented as the daughter of Zeus.

appeals to the gods, she asks (1391): "What god, what dæmon, will hear *thee*, thou breaker of the covenant, thou deceiver of guest-friends?"

(2) Secondly, there can be no doubt that the "poetic" justice meted out to Jason by the old legend is, in the opinion of our poet himself, a righteous retribution. The chorus, who in the old tragedy play throughout the rôle of impartial spectators, and make their comments accordingly, bid Medeia at the outset not be too much distressed because Zeus (highest of all gods) himself (158) "will defend her (*sundikōsei tade*)," literally, will speak on her side, be her advocate. Why? Assuredly not because of Medeia's purity or goodness, but simply because Zeus is guardian of the marriage vow as of all solemn vows of mortals. And it is with allusion to the unfaithfulness of Jason that the chorus declare the old order to be turned upside down: "The springs of the sacred rivers" (=rivers of truth and fidelity) "flow backwards, justice and all else is reversed on the earth, deceit is practised among men, and the faith of the gods no longer prevails. . . . Holy reverence for the oath (*horkon*) has vanished, nor doth the *aidōs* dwell in great Hellas—she hath flown back to heaven." Why? Because the disregard of the marriage vow strikes at the very roots of the social order; the *aidōs*—modesty, purity, reverence—has no place in such a state of things (410-13; 439-440).

Lastly, the chorus, although afterwards horror-struck by the final catastrophe, the slaughter of her innocents by Medeia herself, nevertheless justify the punishment which she inflicts upon the princess; for when the messenger has told the story of her death by the poisoned robe, they say (1231): "Many evils doth the god heap this day upon the head of Jason—and with justice—(*endikōs*).

So much, at least, is clear from the foregoing that to Euripides, as to Sophocles, the old law of the marriage covenant was still one of the bases of human society, the main prop and pillar of the State. Those who sin against it—a Paris, a Jason—those who aid and abet the guilty—a Priam and his sons, a Kreon and his daughter—must alike be destroyed, root and branch, from out the land.

It may, however, be objected that both Paris and Jason had also committed the sin of betraying the guest-friend, and that it is the breach of *this* law which brings down the anger of the gods. Without doubt this aspect of the matter is brought prominently before us in both cases, but that the CHIEF sin is the breaking of the marriage covenant admits of equally little doubt. The sin itself is symbolised by the poisoned robe which Medeia sends to the woman who is determined to wed Jason, although perfectly well aware that his love already belongs of right to another. In the *Trachiniae* of Sophocles, as we recollect, the poisoned robe is also put on by the guilty party, Heracles—not by Iolē, who, as a captive, is will-less and helpless in the matter. That Medeia does not include Jason in this part of the revenge is due to her desire that he should taste of the suffering which he had intended for her—a dishonoured, lonely old age. "Thou mournest not yet," is her parting thrust at Jason (1396). "Wait till thou art old! Then thou wilt realise to the full what thou hast done."

But again, another objection which may be urged with some show of plausibility is, that, in the *Andromache*, our poet deliberately enlists all our sympathies on the side of the heroine, who is the slave-wife or concubine of Neoptolemus, son of Achilles, and into whose mouth he puts an elaborate defence—not exactly of polygamy—but of toleration on the part of the first wife, in the event of the husband's choosing to bring home a second.

This must not blind us to the fact that the whole interest of this drama



(*Andromache*) turns upon the determined resistance offered by Hermione, the lawful wife of Neoptolemus, to such a state of matters, as being entirely opposed to Hellenic laws and customs. With the Greeks, "One man, one wife," was the rule. Hermione is resolved not to admit of any rival in her husband's affections, and in this resolve she is stoutly supported by her father Menelaus. When *Andromache*, therefore, argues in favour of toleration, she is simply trying to make the best of the intolerable position which has fallen to her (Hector's wife!) through the changes and chances of war, and she argues "in character," as an Oriental and a "barbarian" (foreigner). This forms the one point which Hermione makes against her: *Andromache*, she says (*Andr.*, 170), speaks and acts from the barbarian standpoint, and barbarians know no law.

So far from endorsing this "foreign" notion that the wife in such a case should acquiesce cheerfully in her lord's good pleasure, Menelaus declares that the rights of husband and wife are equal, theoretically: "Nay more," he says (*ibid.*, 672), "the man and wife have equal might . . . but *he* hath in his hands the power of force, whilst *she* must look for help to parents and to friends."

These lines, indeed, have been suspected as an interpolation (in the speech of Menelaus), but we see no reason for doubting their genuineness, since the same sentiment meets us in passages which are certainly the work of Euripides. Thus in the *Iphigenia in Aulis*, when Agamemnon bids his wife return home, and informs her of his intention to perform a part in the marriage ceremonies which by common consent and custom fell to the mother of the bride, Clytemnestra flatly refuses to obey. She tells him plainly (*Iph. Aul.*, 739) that he may be master without the house; she will be mistress within. And Agamemnon, king of men, is obliged to retire discomfited, acknowledging that he is beaten on every point.

In the *Andromache*, then, however much we may sympathise with the gentle, lovable heroine through her persecution at the hands of the haughty Hermione, we must not shut our eyes to the truth of the drama. Hermione speaks throughout, and rightfully, as one who has Greek LAW upon her side; *Andromache* as the representative of Oriental customs. We pity an *Andromache* as we pity a Hagar; but we concede that a Hermione, like a Sarah, has rights which may not be passed over.

We cannot conclude this account of our poet's attitude towards women better than by presenting the reader with the beautiful portrait of this same *Andromache* which meets us in the *Trojan Women* (645). *Andromache* is made to describe her manner of life while Hector lived, as follows:—

"Whatsoever is thought to be wise and prudent in women, that," she says, "beneath my Hector's roof I strove to do. And first of all—since (whether scandal hath fastened on a woman's name or not) this of itself brings evil reputation, if she remain not at home—I put aside all idle longings and kept within the house. No foolish praters with their boastful words entered within my doors. The good spirit of the house was my teacher, and I was sufficient unto myself. Even for my husband I had a silent tongue, a gentle eye—knew when the victory over me belonged to him, when over him to me."

Modesty, a retired life, tact, gentleness, and discretion—these are the characteristics which mark, in Euripides' opinion, a good and true wife. Yet, be it noted, the wife is no slave, for she knows when "the victory" belongs fitly to her, and can assert herself, if necessary, but she chooses, rather, the peaceful way of gentle influence. We seem to have here the forerunner of

the "meek and quiet spirit" which the apostle commends—the "low, sweet voice" praised by our own great poet.

## VII.—THE GREAT LAWS

**V. The Solemn Oath and Covenant.**—As we know, the detractors and enemies of our poet denounced him as a "defender of perjury." There are two of these so-called *apologiae* for falsity in his dramas. Let us examine them, and ascertain whether the apologies emanate from Euripides himself, or no.

(1) In the *Iphigenia in Aulis* occurs the following passage (*Iph. Aul.*, 394): "The divinity (to *Theion*) is not without understanding, but takes note of oaths which rest on no firm basis, and are forced on men by necessity." The words refer to the plan devised by old Tyndareus, out of his "well-packed" scheming head, for the safety of his beautiful daughter Helen, and the oath (to defend and protect the interests of the man who should become her husband) which he compels all the rivals and suitors for her hand to take. At first sight the sentiment may appear to constitute an "apology" for that breaking of the Tyndarean oath which Agamemnon contemplates. Two considerations, however, will show immediately that the passage is simply the outcome of the context.

(a) In the first place, Agamemnon is in dire perplexity. His ambition and his desire to stand well with the army assembled at Aulis have hurried him into a dilemma, from which he would give everything, except his position as commander-in-chief, to escape. If he keeps the Tyndarean oath to help Menelaus, then he must sacrifice his own child, Iphigenia. Is it to be wondered at that, in such circumstances, he should seek to throw discredit on the oath itself, as one taken under compulsion? For the breaking of such an oath, he argues, the divinity, who is not without understanding, *i.e.* knowledge of the whole situation, will make allowance.

(b) We must recollect, moreover, that the speaker is a shifty, crafty man, who is represented as having schemed to obtain the coveted post of commander of the united forces of Hellas, a man who has just deceived his own wife and daughter in the most heartless way, and whom his brother Menelaus reproaches with a fickleness and changeableness so marked that his friends never know in what mind or mood they will find him.

Agamemnon is, therefore, speaking "in character," and the "apology for perjury" proceeds from him, not from Euripides. In the end the oath is kept by all the suitors.

(2) With the second and more famous instance, we are already familiar. In the perplexity caused by the nurse's revelation of Phædra's love, Hippolytus says (*Hipp.*, 612, referring to the oath which she has extracted from him): "The tongue hath ta'en the oath, but the *heart* is unsworn." The exclamation is extorted by the conflict of duties into which he finds himself plunged. Not to warn his father against this vile attendant on his young wife seems to the dutiful son as great a crime as the breaking of a promise made in ignorance. Yet in the struggle the sanctity of the oath maintains the upper hand: "Be assured of this, woman," are his words to the nurse, "it is my piety that saves thee. For if thou had'st not bound me unawares by the oaths of the gods, nothing would have hindered me from disclosing this matter to my father" (*ibid.*, 656). It is his recognition of the oath as a sacred and religious obligation which influences the whole conduct of Hippolytus. Witness his appeal (1025) to Zeus as *Horkios*, the guardian of the oath, when protesting his innocence, and his declaration concerning the death of Phædra (1032): "What she



feared and, fearing, destroyed herself, I know not: more it is not lawful (*themis*) for me to say." Hippolytus here distinctly asserts that he may not divulge the secret because he is himself bound by the *themis*—one of the great laws over which the gods watch.

In these two cases, then, Euripides is simply revealing a mental struggle which is going on in the mind of the speaker, as to the validity of an oath taken under certain conditions—by one under compulsion, by the other in ignorance. To the present writer the poet seems to be simply true to nature. It must have been the danger in circumstances such as these which made a greater than himself forbid the taking of such oaths to His followers: "I say unto you, Swear not at all."

The tragedy of Hippolytus will ever stand forth, not as an apology for perjury, but as a noble example of constancy even to death to the solemn promise made.<sup>1</sup>

As the result of a careful study of his writings, we venture to affirm that every unprejudiced reader of Euripides will see in him an upholder of the great unwritten law of the sacredness of the oath, written and engraven on the conscience of humanity. Two further examples of the connection between the gods and the oath, as popularly understood, must suffice here. When the "barbarian" Andromache is deceived by Menelaus, and drawn from her asylum by his promise, afterwards broken, to spare her child, her first thought is (*Andr.*, 439), "Are the gods no longer gods? are they not just?"

And again in the *Phœnissæ* the inhabitants of Thebes are twice represented as fearing the coming of the seven princes on the ground that justice is on the side of Polyneikes. Why? because Eteocles, the present King of Thebes, has broken the covenant made with his brother as to their alternate rule over the city. "They come here with justice (*sun dike*)," says the old pedagogue to Antigone (*Phœn.*, 156), "therefore, I fear lest the gods decide according to the right." And the chorus say (*ibid.*, 256) that they tremble before the "might of Polyneikes, and before the divine power (*to theother*), since he cometh not unjustly to the conflict;" for the inheritance is kept from him in violation of the oath.

## VI. The Law of the Guest-friend and the Suppliant.

(a) *The Guest-friend*.—In addition to the numerous allusions to the sanctity of the relationship known among the Greeks as "guest-friendship"—allusions which run like a golden thread through the old legends of Helen and Medea—we have in Euripides another notable example of the action of the unwritten law in the "revenge" taken by Hecabē on Polymestor, King of Thrace. This story forms one of the main incidents in the intensely pathetic tragedy to which the old queen of Troy lends her name.

The scene of the drama is the shore of the Thracian peninsula, opposite the Phrygian coast, where the Greek army, with Hecabē and the other Trojan captives, are temporarily encamped, having been detained, on their voyage to Greece, by a calm sent by Achilles, whose spirit appears and demands that Polyxena, the youngest daughter of Priam and Hecabē, shall be sacrificed on his grave, as his "meed of honour" from the spoils of Troy.

All this is narrated in a prologue spoken by the Eidolon (ghost) of Polydorus, youngest son of Hecabē and Priam, who further relates his own history, and tells how his father had entrusted him, while still a boy, to the care of his guest-friend Polymestor, king of the richest part of Thrace, sending secretly with the lad a large sum of money, which was intended as a provision for the remaining children of Priam in the event of the Phrygian city being destroyed. So long as the walls of Troy still stood and Hector lived, Polymestor remained

<sup>1</sup> See remarks on p. 458.

true to his charge ; but when the fortune of war had changed, and Priam and Hector were no more, then the boy was treacherously murdered by his father's trusted guest-friend, "for the sake of his gold," and his body thrown into the sea. There, "unmourned and without a grave," it was tossed about for three days by the waves, whilst the spirit of Polydorus escaped from its shell, wandered on earth, waiting for the fulfilment of the promise given to him by the gods of the unseen world, that his dishonoured body should be found, and buried by his mother's own hands.

Of all that has happened, Hecabē has a terrible presentiment, for the phantasm of Polydorus has appeared to her in a dream, and warned her of the fresh afflictions that await her. On that very day, says the Eidolon, Hecabē shall behold the dead bodies of her youngest son and daughter, for Polyxena shall be slain on the grave of Achilles, and his own corpse shall be thrown up by the sea, and brought to the poor mother, that it may be buried by her loving hands, and Polydorus thus obtain the rest for which he longs.<sup>1</sup>

All falls out in accordance with the prediction of Polydorus. Polyxena is sacrificed, and hardly has Hecabē had time to hear from the Greek herald the story of her daughter's noble end, when the body of her murdered son is carried in by a woman who has found it exposed on the beach, where it had been washed up by the waves. The mutilated body tells its own tale. Polydorus has not fallen into the sea by misadventure—he is the victim of foul play. The wretched mother at once perceives the meaning of the warning dream in which she had seen a tender hind pursued and destroyed by a ravening wolf. It is her guest-friend, she exclaims, who has done this ruthless, this unnamable deed. Agamemnon appears at this juncture to urge upon Hecabē the necessity of burying the remains of her daughter without delay ; and Hecabē, in her agony of grief, falls as a suppliant at the feet of her direst enemy, and begs of him to intervene in her behalf, and punish the man who, "fearing neither the gods below nor those above, has committed this unholy of crimes. I, indeed, may be a slave and weak," continues Hecabē, "but the Gods are strong, and their Law rules with might." This law, she reminds the king, is in his keeping.<sup>2</sup> If it is destroyed, if those who slay the guest-friend and trample under foot the sacred things of the gods escape unpunished, then will nothing more be lasting upon earth. "O king !" she concludes (*Hec.*, 786 *et seq.*), "O greatest light of Hellas, have pity ! lend thine arm of vengeance to the grey-haired woman—even although *she* be a nothing, yet hearken ! for it becometh well a noble man to minister to justice, and in all places and at all times to chastise the evil-doer."

Agamemnon is touched by the grief of the royal lady—still a lady and a queen, although a captive. He has just witnessed the heroic death of her daughter, the maiden who was sister to that virgin whom he had chosen (sacrilegiously) for himself, Cassandra. The wounds of the lad so treacherously murdered plead eloquently that justice may be meted out upon the murderer. Still, with characteristic cowardice, Agamemnon hesitates and finally refuses to assist the aged queen. He pities her and her son, he says, and would willingly accede to her request and punish this impious guest-friend "both for the sake of the gods and of justice," but—he fears the people, the Greek army, who regard the Thracian king as their friend, and the murdered

<sup>1</sup> See *ante* for an account of the ancient Homeric beliefs concerning the dead. So long as the body remained unburied, the spirit, it was supposed, could not obtain entrance to the house of Hades, but hovered disconsolately on the shores of the river.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. section on Homer, where the functions of the king are described.



son of the Trojan Priam as an enemy. They will suspect him, he says, of espousing the cause of Priam's house out of love to Cassandra.

"Alas!" exclaims Hecabē, "there is not among mortals ONE FREE man," if this mighty prince, this "great light of Hellas," so fears the multitude that he dares not carry out the retribution which he acknowledges to be demanded alike by the gods and by human justice. She herself, she says, will set him free from his fears; she herself, a weak and despised woman, with the help of others equally weak, will carry out the punishment; all she asks is that Agamemnon shall stand aside, and not assist the evil-doer.

To this Agamemnon assents, and Hecabē quickly devises with her fellow-captives an awful plan of vengeance. She sends a messenger to the Thracian king, begging him to come to her at once with his two sons, as she has something of importance to tell him, something that concerns him even more than herself. Polymestor, little suspecting that his sin is known, complies with her wish, and, in answer to her inquiries, assures her that the youth, whose dead body lies within a yard or two of him, is alive and well, and longing to see his mother. Hecabē, restraining her indignation, induces him to send away his retinue, and then entices him, with a story of a buried treasure, to enter her tent alone with his sons. Here he is surrounded by the Trojan women, who deprive him of his eyesight, and slay the children.

The wretched man, crawling out of the tent and feeling his way like a "four-footed beast of the forest," as he says, appeals in a frenzy of passion to Agamemnon to avenge him on the women, asserting that he had slain the son of Priam out of friendship to the Greeks. In vain. Agamemnon cannot accept this version of the motive which had impelled Polymestor to the deed; he knows the story of the gold, and declines to interfere.

"To you," he says (*Hec.*, 1247), "it may seem a light thing to slay guest-friends—but to us, to these Hellenes" (pointing to his retinue), "the deed is infamous. How then could I, did I pronounce thee guiltless, myself escape censure? Impossible! Since thou hast dared to do what is base, so take the consequences."

"Atrocious" as the "revenge" of Hecabē may seem, then, it is—viewed by the light even of the age of Euripides—not so much "revenge" as a justly merited punishment, carried out by the nearest of kin, as avenger of blood, because the king, to whose hands, in the heroic age, was entrusted the guardianship of the sacred laws, refuses to execute justice. "An eye for an eye—a tooth for a tooth—life for life"—is the maxim universally acted upon by Phrygian and by Hellene as by Hebrew. To her compatriots, the revenge of Hecabē is a noble deed, bravely carried out. Just as the Hebrews sang: "Blessed above women shall Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite be, blessed above women in the tent," because "she put her hand to the nail and her right hand to the hammer and smote" the enemy of their country—so do the women of Troy praise Hecabē and extol the justice of her action. The verdict of the chorus when Polymestor enters the tent to meet his doom is (*Hec.*, 1029): "He is called to account by justice (*dikē*)—is found guilty by the gods—destruction awaiteth him."

(b) *The Suppliant*.—The beautiful old law that the strong is bound to defend the helpless who casts himself upon his protection in the name of Zeus, the suppliant's god, receives ample illustration in the writings of our poet. The drama which bears the name of the *Suppliants* naturally treats of the subject, but as we shall have to deal with this later, we may leave it for the present, and confine our attention to another play, the *Heracleidæ*, in which the right of the suppliant forms the mainspring of the action.

The *Heracleidæ*, as the name implies, takes up the history of the descendants of Heracles. Eurystheus, King of Argos, the relentless taskmaster of the hero during his lifetime, continues to display his hatred and fear of the race by persecuting the children after the father's death. He dreads, not unnaturally, lest the sons of Heracles should call him to account for his conduct to their father, and seize his throne. Not satisfied, therefore, with banishing them from Argos, he is resolved to exterminate them altogether, and pursues them into every land where, led by Iolaus, their father's comrade-in-arms, they desire to settle, announcing to its prince that he must choose between the expulsion of the Heraclids and war with Argos. No ruler had hitherto been found willing to face this danger. As soon as it is seen how weak their leader is, how small the children, deprived of a father's care, they are driven forth, and forced to seek another asylum.

When the drama opens, the fugitives have finally reached Attica, where they have taken refuge "with the gods" until their doom is once more pronounced by the powers that be. The young daughters of Heracles, under the care of their grandmother, Alcmenē, the aged mother of the hero, have sought safety within a temple; the boys, with old Iolaus, holding the wool-entwined boughs of the suppliant, encircle the sacred altar of Zeus. Hardly have they thus entrenched themselves "in sanctuary" than their old enemy is upon them. The herald of Eurystheus appears, and demands that the children shall instantly be given up to him. This Iolaus refuses to do, whereupon the herald throws him down; the old man shouts for help, and his cries bring first the townspeople, finally the King of Athens, to his help. This king is Demophon, son of Theseus, and to him, as to the rulers of the other states whither the fugitives had fled, is presented the alternative: Give up the children, or prepare for war. Demophon nobly chooses the latter course; a battle ensues between the Argives and the Athenians, in which the former are defeated, and the tyrant Eurystheus, whose life had been spared by his captors, is delivered over to Alcmenē, by whom he is put to death.

Such is the main outline of the story. With it is interwoven the pathetic tradition of the heroic self-sacrifice of Macaria, eldest daughter of Heracles. This will engage our attention later on. Here we would only point out the part played by the unwritten law as the *motif* of the drama.

(a) *The Suppliant*.—When Copreus, the herald of Eurystheus, summons Iolaus to surrender, and threatens him with death by stoning, the old man's retort is (*Her.*, 61): "Not so! for the altar of Zeus protecteth me, and this free land wherein we stand." And when Copreus endeavours to attain his end by force, Iolaus' cry for help is (69): "To the rescue, ye men of Athens! They are dragging us hence, *us* the suppliants of Zeus! The sacred wreaths are desecrated, the city is disgraced, the gods dishonoured!"

(b) *The chorus as impartial spectators*.—The warning of the chorus, the freemen of Athens, to the herald is couched in the same strain (101): "Tis meet, stranger," they say, "to reverence (*aideisthai*) the suppliants of the gods, and not to drive them from the seat of the gods by main force. That crime high justice (*potnia dikē*) will not permit." And again, when Copreus urges them to deliver up the children, their reply is (107): "Twere godless in the state (*atheos*—atheistical), did she turn away the supplicant prayer of strangers."

(c) *The Supreme Power*.—When Demophon himself appears upon the scene, he declares that "three reasons" compel him (*anankazousi*—force him, of necessity) not to yield to the demand of the herald: "The greatest of these," he says (236 *et seq.*), "is Zeus (*to men megiston Zeus*), by whose altar ye are



seated as suppliants ; " the second reason is the relationship which had existed between his father Theseus and Heracles, the father of the suppliants ; the third reason is the sense of shame, *to aischron*—the disgrace that would fall upon him, were he, as ruler of the land, cowardly to give up suppliants at the bidding of Argos. Were he to do this, says the king, he would no longer deem himself a dweller in a free land—such a deed were as bad as hanging !

Three motives urge me on, says the king—God, gratitude, fear of disgrace—but the greatest of these is God !

Copreus finally suggests a compromise : " Take thou them to the frontier," he says, " and *we* will conduct them thence," an artifice which is met with fine Hellenic contempt : " thou art become a fool (*skaios*)," says the king (259), " thinking thyself wiser than the god !"—in other words, " Thinkest thou that the god of suppliants can be so outwitted ? that *my* responsibility for those committed to my care stops short at the frontier ? "

These quotations, much as they suffer from being taken out of their pathetic setting, will suffice to show at least the truth of our assertion. The grand law of the right of the suppliant to protection—with its fellow-law of the guest-friend, the basis of all international law—had its roots, not in any convention or agreement formally entered into by the peoples of the earth, but far deeper, in the sanctities of the human heart, the consciousness, *suneidēsis*,<sup>1</sup> of the existence of a power that watched over these sanctities, a power invisible but all-knowing, that punished the overstepping, and blessed the observance of them.

" Fear not," says the king (248), " that any one shall drag thee or the children from this altar ; " three reasons compel me not to deliver you up : God, gratitude, honour, but " the greatest of these is God." And when his decision to trust to the arbitrament of war is made known, the comment of the chorus (amid the natural excitement caused by the intelligence that a powerful force is already on the frontier) is (766) :—

" Zeus (= God) is my ally. I will not fear."

**VII. Blood-guilt.**—The deepening of the sense of moral guilt, the mental anguish incurred by the shedding of blood, is evidenced in a very striking passage in the *Hercules Furens*. After the fit of madness sent by Hera has passed away, and Heracles discovers in the dead bodies of wife and children what he, all-unwitting, has done, the sense of disgrace and shame presses upon him no less keenly than the intensity of his grief. He realises that henceforward he will be an outcast—dare present himself in no temple, join no friendly circle. To such a pass has he, the son of Zeus, come. The misery has befallen him through no fault of his own—nevertheless, it is there.

The stain of blood is on him, the blood of those nearest and dearest to him, and in his agony he exclaims (*Her. Fur.*, 1295), " What shall I do ? whither shall I turn ? With voice forbidding, earth calleth to me, *Touch me not !*—the sea, the founts of rivers, ' *Pass me not !*'—and bound like Ixion to the wheel, I move in chains." The curse of Cain is on him, " Grievous to mortals," says the chorus in the *Medeia* (1268), when the mother in her awful revenge is about to take the life of her children. " Heavy is the curse that falleth on those who have shed on earth the blood of kinsfolk, and *anguish corresponding* is brought from God on the house."

**VIII. The Rights of the Dead.**—It is evident that the sacred obligation of providing a last resting-place for the shrine of the human spirit is fully recognised by one so entirely in sympathy with the noblest elements of human nature as Euripides. What the national religious ideas on the subject were

<sup>1</sup> Knowledge with some one else.

we have already examined in our section on Sophocles, and need only point out here, that, in reverence for this great Hellenic law, Euripides goes even beyond his great contemporary. Sophocles, in the *Antigone*, exhibits a sister sacrificing her own life rather than neglect the duty of giving the last rites to a brother; but Euripides, in the *Suppliants*, shows us the same feeling at work in a stranger on behalf of strangers. He recognises the right of the dead in its true light as an international law, part of the common heritage of Hellas.

Let us briefly glance at the drama. In connection with our present subject it has many claims on our attention. We have already hinted that, in it, Euripides seems to vie with the older poet in his reverential treatment of all that commends itself as truly divine to his own mind. In the *Suppliants*, Euripides, the rationalist, lays aside his weapons for the time, desists from his trenchant analysis of mythological fables, and contents himself with a sweet and tender exposition of the great religious truths which lay behind mythology as the sun behind a cloud. The beneficent initiative and guiding of Divine providence, the honour due to the Divine power, the respect and affection due to parents, the gentle treatment of the erring as due from one frail human being to another, the care of suppliants; finally, the right of the dead, and the recognition of the grand fact that the most menial office is ennobled when done out of pity for others, all find beautiful and truthful expression in this simple old drama.

The *Suppliants* are the mothers of those princes of Argos who had accompanied Polyneikes of Thebes in the disastrous expedition undertaken against his native city, and against the known will of the gods. All have perished except Adrastus, King of Argos, the leader of the united forces. Kreon of Thebes, now in authority there, refuses to bury the bodies of the slain, and Adrastus and the mothers of the fallen heroes have come to Attica to protest against this breach of Hellenic law, and to ask help of Theseus the king. When the drama opens, they appear at Eleusis as suppliants before the temple of the two goddesses, Demeter and her daughter Persephone, who reign supreme in the lower world, whither the spirits of the departed have gone. So long as the body remains unburied, however, the spirit cannot enter into rest,<sup>1</sup> a reflection which intensifies the natural grief of the mothers. In order, therefore, to give the more effect to their plea for redress, they appeal first to Æthra, mother of King Theseus. She, who has with them the common bond of motherhood, will also feel with them (they imagine), and urge her son to take up arms in their behalf.

Æthra does press their claims, ably and successfully, as we know, and uses no lower argument than the honour due to the Divine power and the law of Hellas (p. 461). On these grounds, and on his own reputation as a warrior and a noble man, she rests her appeal, and Theseus—after a show of hesitation, purposely made to enforce upon Adrastus a sense of the sin which he has committed against the gods—consents to undertake the task of rescuing the bodies of the slain.

In vain does the Theban herald (sent by Kreon to demand the expulsion of the suppliants) seek to dissuade him by threats, or by the still more potent argument of self-love (*Supp.*, 465 *et seq.*): "Argos is nothing to Theseus; he does not belong to it." The king rejects the selfish plea with scorn, and replies (525) that in demanding the burial of the dead he is upholding the law of all the Hellenes.

"Thinkest thou," he says again (537), "that by not burying the dead thou harmest Theseus only? Nay! this is a matter common to all Hellas."

If his peaceful and just demand is not granted, he adds, he will proceed to

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the episode of Polydorus in the *Hecabe*, p. 471.



take the dead by force of arms (560), "Never shall it go forth to Hellas that a law, ancient and from the gods, entrusted to me and to the State of Pandion, was trodden under foot." And with the approval of his own subjects, and the verdict of the chorus ringing in his ears (565): "Be of good courage! for by upholding the majesty of JUSTICE, thou wilt escape many censures of men," Theseus starts on this new expedition against Thebes, one undertaken on behalf of the gods and the "common" law of Hellas.

His efforts are successful; the bodies of the soldiery are reverently interred; those of the princes brought back to their mourning relatives. And, mark! the remains of the princely dead are entrusted to no servant; they are washed and made ready for the funeral pyre by his own royal hands. The hero Theseus performs for these his lifeless suppliants, the representatives to him of two great laws, the menial offices of a slave. Pity and piety, in Hellenic opinion, could no further go. Thus Theseus showed "*how he loved the dead*" (764).

### VIII.—THE IDEALS

It is in any attempt to deal with the IDEALS of the master that the real difficulty of a commentator on Euripides begins—a difficulty caused not by the poverty of the materials at our disposal, but by their wealth; for we are confronted by a veritable *embarras de richesses*. An Hellene of the Hellenes, Euripides gives up none of the ancient ideals of his people. The *aidōs*, glory, the mean—these and others meet us in his pages, glowing with fresh beauty; and in addition we have new ideals of human life which stamp the man who gave expression to them as, so far, the greatest of the great Hellenic forerunners of CHRIST. This assertion we hope to justify by the proofs which we shall lay before the reader. Meantime we would direct his attention to a passage which seems to offer a fitting introduction to this part of our subject. It occurs in a speech of Orestes in the *Electra*; but, in order to appreciate it fully, we must take a brief glance at the circumstances under which it is uttered.

Electra is a younger daughter of Agamemnon, and the only one who, according to the tradition, remains faithful to the memory of her murdered father. Hellenic customs call upon the nearest of kin either to avenge the death, or to see that it is avenged; and, true to her idea of duty and filial love, Electra will not condone the sin of her mother, Clytemnestra, nor show honour to the man who shared it, Ægisthus, the usurper who now bears rule in Agamemnon's place. She refuses all the joys of life, and seems only to exist for the hope of carrying out what she conceives to be a righteous vengeance.

Naturally enough, she becomes an object of suspicion to Clytemnestra and of hatred to Ægisthus, who wishes to kill her, and is only prevented from executing his wish by his consort. Such, in brief, is the outline of the tradition concerning Electra, a tradition followed in the main by all three of the great Greek tragedians.

In the hands of Euripides, however, the story receives a new development: the guilty man who sits on Agamemnon's throne conceives a plan whereby Electra's plans of vengeance may be frustrated. Any husband or son of hers would necessarily (he is aware) be his *foe*; he takes measures, therefore, in advance, to weaken the foe, and to this end gives the princess in marriage to a man, of good family, indeed, but poor, so poor that he is forced to follow the plough for a livelihood. No son born in wedlock such as this need cause a thrill of fear!

Ægisthus, however, has mistaken his man. The husband chosen for Electra dares not refuse the proffered bride; he is compelled for his own safety to fall in, ostensibly, with the plan of the powers that be; but, in reality, he receives Electra only as his ward and treats her as an honoured guest, to whom he offers an asylum and protection until such time as her brother and natural protector, Orestes, the exiled son of Agamemnon, shall appear.

In due course Orestes does appear, and when he learns the character of the man whose poor abode his sister shares—a dwelling “fit only for a ditcher or a cowherd,” but made glorious by the great-heartedness of its owner—his amazement finds vent in the following words (*El.*, 252):—

“There is no certain touchstone for true manliness” (*euandria*, i.e. no certainty as to where we may expect to find it); “for in the inborn qualities of mortals reigns much confusion. Oft have I seen the son of noble sire a nothing, whilst children of bad men are good. *Want*<sup>1</sup> have I seen within the rich man’s mind, and judgment mature beneath the poor man’s robe. How, then, shall we sift (*krinei*) the matter? By riches? Wealth were indeed a sorry test. By poverty? Nay, for to her there clingeth this disease that, by constraint of want, she teacheth evil unto men. Or shall we have recourse to arms? But who, by merely looking at the spear, dare testify the bearer of it to be good man and true (*agathos*)? ’Twere better, after all, to leave the question undecided, for here we find a man—neither accounted great among the Argives, nor himself inflated with birth-ride—one of the people and yet noble (*aristos* = a true aristocrat).”<sup>2</sup>

So far Orestes. Now our poet himself takes the word, and as though irresistibly led on by his train of thought, suddenly turns to his countrymen with the passionate outburst (*El.*, 367–390): “Will ye never *understand*, O ye, who, full of vain opinions (empty tests of glory),<sup>3</sup> err in judgment? Will ye not learn to judge of mortals by their *dealings*, their intercourse with man,<sup>4</sup> and test the noble *eugeneis* by their *character* (*êthesin*)? For such men—true noblemen—serve well both home and State. *Bodies* of men, empty of mind, are naught but pillars in the market-place. Neither in conflict doth the strong endure much longer than the weak, for disposition here decideth and a noble soul (*eupsychia*).”

In these few lines Euripides plainly indicates how completely the ancient ideals are passing away. The grand old words—*euandria*, *eugeneia*, *eupsychia*, every one of which occurs in some form in the passage—no longer represent strength of arm, noble birth, mere animal courage. They are used, one and all, in connection with a man, a plougher of the fields, whose claim to respect—to be considered manly, noble, courageous—rests solely on his moral character, his chivalry towards a helpless woman. The “power of the fist” is no longer highest arbiter. The body and bodily strength, says our poet, devoid of mind (*phrenôn* = brain), is a mere mass of flesh—its owner nothing better—of no more avail amid the thousand and one problems of the new time than “a lifeless statue in the market-place.” And even in the arbitrament of arms, he argues, it is the SPIRIT that decides the day—the *eupsychia*—the noble courage, that may find a home within the weakest as within the strongest frame.

This being so, the old tests, to the poet’s discerning glance, are valueless. Wealth and poverty alike are nothing. “Honour and shame from no con-

<sup>1</sup> *Limos* = famine.

<sup>2</sup> The reputed husband of Electra is indeed of good family, but Orestes does not know this. From the poet’s standpoint the meaning is the same—he is still an *aristos*, although his wealth is gone.

<sup>3</sup> *Kenôn doxasmâtôn*.

<sup>4</sup> *Homilia*.



dition rise"—a consideration which leads naturally to his first great ideal, TRUE EQUALITY—the man of the people may be as noble, as much of an *aristeus*, as the born aristocrat.

This thought, again, leads naturally to insistence on the only real test of worth: Will ye never understand that a noble soul is revealed in character and acts?—that by "their *fruits* ye shall know men"?

And what are these fruits of real worth as they appeared to this old heathen (?) thinker?

The very fruits which, later, came supremely to maturity in the grandest of human lives—GENEROSITY and LOVE, COMPASSION and SELF-SACRIFICE.

THE OLDER IDEALS.—*The mean* finds beautiful illustration in the character of Achilles and of Ion. The former declares (*Iph. Aul.*, 919 *et seq.*) that, as the pupil of the best of men, old Cheiron, he has learned to have "simple ways"—*i.e.* to love truth and sincerity, to grieve over the evils of life, and to rejoice over its honours, equally, *with moderation* (*metrios*), for it is men who are thus minded, he adds, who go through life with judgment (*gnōmēs meta*). The mean is here the thoughtfully chosen middle path of action.

The praises of the mean, again, as a state or condition of life—*i.e.* the middle state, equally remote from wealth and want, are sung repeatedly. During the Great *Pentekontaetes*, the fifty years that elapsed between the close of the Persian and the breaking out of the Peloponnesian War, there had grown up in Athens that bulwark of the State, the middle class, and our poet is never tired of descanting on its advantages. In the great speech of Theseus in the *Suppliants* (237 *et seq.*), there occurs a description of the three classes in the State—a passage so irrelevant to the matter in hand, that it leaves the impression of having been inserted merely in order to give expression to the poet's own ideas on the subject. There are, he says, three kinds of citizens in the State—

(1) *The wealthy*. These are useless and ever crave for more.

(2) *Those who have not*, and lack the wherewithal to live. These are given to envy, and, deceived by the tongues of bad leaders, they become pricks and thorns in the side of those who *have*.

(3) But they who stand in midst of both—(neither puffed up by wealth, nor harassed by want)—these preserve the State; they guard its order and maintain its discipline.

In the same sense, the nurse in the *Medeia* laments the unbridled passion of her foster-daughter: "Fearful is the pride of princes," she says. "Rarely themselves compelled to yield, and ruling many with the strong hand, it is hard to turn them from their anger. Better, therefore, is it"—so she reasons—"to be accustomed to live with equals. May it be my fate," she adds (*Med.*, 119), "to grow old, if not in greatness, yet in security and peace. For the very name of the moderate (*tōn metriōn*) conquers. 'Tis by far the best that men can wish for. The overplus, the 'too-much,' brings no good to mortals, but destruction to the house if once the anger of the god be roused."

But not only does the middle state in life ensure safety to society and to the individual, it also brings with it another very great blessing and one that commended itself instinctively as the choicest to the Hellenic mind. This is its comparative freedom from care and anxiety, its *scholē*=leisure. This aspect of the mean is pointed out in the noble speech wherein Ion declines the offer of his supposed father, Xuthus, to accompany him as heir-expectant of his throne, to Athens: that much-vaunted thing, royalty, he says (*Ion*, 621), is an empty show. Outwardly, indeed, it looks sweet and alluring; but seen

from within, at home, it is grievous, and full of care. For who can be happy, who taste enjoyment, that passes his days in constant fear of lurking danger? "Rather would I," says Ion, "live in happiness as one of the people, than be a king, compelled (by force of circumstances) to be on friendly terms with the bad, and, trembling for his life, to hate the good. But," continues Ion, "you will say, perhaps, that gold outweighs all this—that to be wealthy is to be happy? Nay!" decides the youth, "I love neither to be blamed (as a rich man) because I keep my money in my hands—nor yet to be overburdened (as a poor one) with toil. May the middle path (*metria*) never become distasteful to me!" And then he goes on to draw that beautiful picture of the life which he had led at Delphi, as an unknown youth, "one of the people"—the quiet, retired life, which still has attractions so strong for those who are sufficient unto themselves—the life which offers what Euripides emphatically declares to be "sweetest of all to men—*scholē* = leisure!"—leisure for study, for art, for thought.

Finally, let us note that Euripides, as a true prophet, does not fail to warn his countrymen, in his own fashion, against a certain sophistical perversion of the genuine Hellenic doctrine of the mean. The reader will recollect the cynical advice given by the nurse to the unhappy Phædra, when she bids her cease from the struggle with temptation. The advice thus given is, however, in keeping with her character, for the woman is introduced to the reader at the first as a staunch upholder of the mean. Her favourite apophthegm is (*Hipp.*, 264): "I praise the 'too-much' (*to lian*) less than the 'nothing-too-much' (*to mēden agan*), and wise men agree with me."

The nurse, however, interprets (*Hipp.*, 433 *et seq.*) the old saying of the wise men in her own way by counselling her charge against "too-much" goodness, "too-much" self-control. Let Phædra be content, she says, if the good in her is more than the evil. To attempt more than this were sheer presumption, *hybris*, for it would be to try to be better than the gods, who certainly, according to the myths, were not troubled by the too-much in the ways of righteousness.

*Glory.*—The counterfeit of another Hellenic ideal—ambition and self-seeking posing as the thirst for true glory—is also detected and exposed by Euripides. *Philotimia*—in its primary sense a noble word, love of honour, generous rivalry in the good—has, like many another noble word, been abused, and come to have a baser meaning. In the *Phœnissæ* (529) it is that which causes the strife between the two sons of Œdipus—the desire of one to become sole possessor of the throne—and Euripides therefore calls this grand old *Philotimia* "the worst of goddesses," a dæmon who has ruined many a house and state where she was worshipped.

Elsewhere, true fame, the generous appreciation by others of some excellence in oneself—*doxa*—is to our poet what it was to every Hellene—the crowning charm of life, that something, the absence of which spoils all other blessings. The early Greeks had no notion that talents should be exercised in stillness, or valiant deeds done in a corner. Until brought to the touchstone of competition in the blaze of the noonday sun, talent and valour, they imagined, availed their possessor little. The cynical speech of Jason to Medea, with which we are already acquainted (p. 466), is simply an expression of this great factor in Hellenic character. When Medea reproaches Jason with ingratitude, his contention is that he has given to her more than she could ever give to him; for, not only has she been made acquainted, through him, with justice and Hellenic laws, but, he adds, "every one in Hellas knows that thou art wise, and thou hast won glory—



*doxa*!" As for himself, Jason says (*Med.*, 534), he would not wish to possess either wealth or the power of melody of an Orpheus, if Fortune did not grant him therewith distinction—*episēmos*—i.e. if he did not stand out before the world as a *marked* man, stamped with the approval of his fellows—a sentiment which, we may be perfectly sure, would be applauded by an Athenian audience to the echo.

Even more significant is the passage in which Hecabē finds consolation for her woes in the thought that her story will be sung by poets, and go down to posterity. She, once Queen of Troy, is a slave; her husband and sons are slain; her city lies in ruins; her grandson, Hector's child, has just been torn from its mother, thrown from the battlements, and killed. And yet, amid all this, one ray of light darts through the mind of the bowed-down woman; she suddenly raises herself upright and exclaims to her companions in misery (*Tro.*, 1237):—

"O dearest women!"

A something in the ejaculation, some alteration in the tone, takes her fellow-captives by surprise:—

"Hecabē!" they say, "what means this cry?"—what is this thought of joy that has flashed upon thee like a message from on high?

And Hecabē proceeds to explain it. The gods, she says, have willed nothing more than *her* miseries, and Troia they had hated beyond all cities—they had offered sacrifice in vain. All this was true. Nevertheless she adds, and here is the consolation: If God had *not* visited them thus, overturned them, thrown them down to the ground, "*we*," she says, "being unknown to fame, would have remained unknown, nor have given to the Muses themes for songs in which we shall live for ever."

The thought that her story will be sung in time to come "in songs imperishable," is to Hecabē not only consolation, but something more—compensation for her woes. The thought of glory to the Hellenes was, in fact, nearly akin to the hope of immortality.

The *aidōs* is to Euripides at least as much as to Homer. A short analysis of a few passages in which the word occurs will suffice to exhibit some of its many meanings.

(1) In its primary sense, *aidōs* signifies, as we recollect (p. 284), that *honourable shame* which will deter a man from doing anything that might bring disgrace upon him. It thus differs from *aischyne*, which denotes rather *shame after* the event, the disgrace as actually existing. In Euripides the two words are generally distinct, although they occasionally seem to overlap. Even in the overlapping, however, the "distinction with a difference" is often clear enough.

(a) We have a beautiful example of this in the *Madness of Heracles*. Just after the hero awakes from his stupor and discovers the awful deed which he has committed, his friend, Theseus of Athens, is seen approaching. Heracles immediately covers his head, with the words (*Her. Main.*, 1160): "I am ashamed (*aischynomai*) of the evil deeds which I have done." When Theseus asks Amphitryon, however, why Heracles has covered his head, the old man replies (1199), "Because he is ashamed (*aidomenos*) to meet thine eye." Here the chief actor in the scene, acutely conscious of his own disgrace, uses the expression *aischynomai*, whilst Amphitryon, who knows that the deed was committed unconsciously, whilst the Hero "was not himself," attributes the shame to the *aidōs*. The mind of the real Heracles revolts from the atrocity perpetrated by the mad Heracles, and the *aidōs* compels him to cover his head "in very shame."

(b) A distinction even more subtle is drawn in the *Hecabē*. When the old Trojan queen has sent for Polymestor (the Thracian king, whom she intends to punish for his treachery), she receives him veiled, and accosts him thus (see *ante*, p. 472): "I am ashamed (*aischynomai*) to look thee in the face, Polymestor, amid these troubles which encompass me, for shame itself (*aidōs*) prevents me from meeting with open glance those who knew me in happier days" (*Hec.*, 968). Here the *aischynē* springs from the *aidōs*. It is because Hecabē possesses the *aidōs*, the noble sense of honour, the royal consciousness of what she has been outwardly, is still inwardly, that that other consciousness—of being a *slave*—brings with it a sense of disgrace, *aischynē*, which is intolerable.<sup>1</sup>

(c) The same distinction is noticeable in the *Orestes*. Helen has just been brought back to Greece by Menelaus, who sends her to Mycenæ under cover of the night on account of the feeling that prevails against her among the people. Next day she says to her niece Electra, that she would fain honour the grave of her sister Clytemnestra, but cannot go to it herself. She therefore begs Electra to discharge this duty for her, and take the customary offerings of the dead. Electra inquires why she will not go herself, and Helen's reply is (*Or.*, 98):—

"I am ashamed (*aischynomai*) to show myself to the Argives."

"Late comes the thought of wisdom to thee," bitterly retorts Electra; "disgracefully (*aischrōs*) didst thou leave thy home." The meaning is: 'Tis a pity this sense of disgrace (*aischynē*) comes so late—the disgrace really began *then*, when thou didst leave thy home.

"Thou speakest truly—but not as a friend," replies Helen meekly.

Electra, however, is not to be mollified, and asks cynically what *aidōs* (*i.e.* what noble shame) now deters her from facing the Mycenaean folk?—a thrust which brings out the confession that it is no real *aidōs*, no noble shame, but bodily fear which keeps Helen within the castle walls—the fear of those whose sons had perished before Troy. Helen knows that her life would be in danger were she to show herself openly, and Electra confirms the fear by telling her that every tongue in Mycenæ cries out against her. The expression, therefore, which Helen uses of herself at the beginning of the dialogue is correct—*aischynomai* = I am disgraced. Had she possessed the *aidōs*, the fear of disgrace, the *aischynē*, disgrace itself, would never have come upon her.

(d) As *shame* the *aidōs* came to have (as Euripides himself tells us in the *Hippolytus*) a bad sense. If people realised this, he says, they would not have given the same name to two different things. This bad *aidōs* is either (a) some confusion with *aischynē* wherein the *aidōs* = disgrace, or it is (b), as we ventured to suggest (p. 480), the "too-much" of modesty, that diffidence and distrust of his own powers which prevents a man from accepting responsibility and coming to the front in public life, whereby, says the poet, shame comes to his house.

(2) Then, again, the *aidōs* is—still in the strict primary sense—the honourable shame which flees the stigma attaching to cowardice. Thus, in the *Heracleidæ* (813), the servant who has been sent to inform Alcmenē of the victory won by Athens, in giving an account of the battle, relates how Hyllus, her grandson, the eldest son of Heracles, had flung himself from his chariot between the con-

<sup>1</sup> The whole passage is dramatically fine. The real reason why Hecabē will not look Polymestor in the face is, of course, because she dare not betray the revengeful feelings which actuate her. She is so conscious of this, that she hastens to put forward another excuse for remaining veiled, viz. that custom forbids women to look men in the face. Polymestor, in his turn, appears rather surprised that Hecabē should consider apology necessary, and simply replies, "I quite understand." Hecabē, in fact, very naturally, overdoes her part, in her anxiety to conceal her intentions.



tending forces, and proposed to Eurystheus of Argos that the question at issue should be decided by single combat. The whole army shouts applause, the word, they say, is well and courageously spoken, but Eurystheus refuses the offer. Says the messenger emphatically:—

“He, the general, was neither ashamed (*aidesthēis*) of his words nor of his own faint heart, but showed himself most cowardly (*kakistos*). And such an one was he who came to enslave the sons of Heracles!”

(3) Yet again the *aidōs* retains its old and most beautiful meaning of reverence for the Divine unwritten laws; that holy shame which will not let a man do violence to his own best impulses and feelings.

(a) *Reverence for Suppliants*.—In the *Heracleidæ* (101) the chorus bids the Argive herald “reverence (*aideisthai*) the suppliants of the gods, nor attempt to drive them from the altar by force.” And in the same drama it is said (236) that the disgrace (*to aischron*) which most of all a man must flee, is the giving up of suppliants (the defenceless) at the bidding of a stronger.

Again in the *Hecabē* (286), when the old queen is pleading with Odysseus as a suppliant for the life of her daughter Polyxena, she says: “Reverence me (*aidesthete me*) and have compassion!”

(b) *The Reverence due to Old Age*.—In the *Madness of Heracles* (556), when the hero suddenly returns from the lower world, and finds his old father as well as his own wife and children prisoners in the hands of Lycus, tyrant of Thebes, he asks of Megara: “Had he no *aidōs*, no reverence, that he thus dishonoured the aged?” And Megara’s reply is emphatic:—

“*Aidōs!* verily he dwelleth far from that divinity.”

(4) This brings us naturally to another aspect of the *aidōs* closely allied to the last, viz. compassion. It is said of the *anankē*—that mysterious all-compelling necessity (natural law) which was supposed in the popular belief to hold supreme sway over all things, and even to share the throne of Zeus<sup>1</sup>—that “in her harsh purpose there is no *aidōs*, no ruth.” The passage (*Alc.*, 982) occurs *à propos* of the death of Alcestis, and is simply an allegorical way of putting the fact that Death is inexorable—knows no compassion.

A striking example of the *aidōs*, as both compassion and reverence for law combined, occurs in the *Iphigenia in Tauris* (947 *et seq.*), in the passage in which Orestes describes how he, the mother-slayer, fared as a stranger in Athens: “I went thither (at the command of Apollo),” he says, “but at first none of my friends received me willingly, regarding me as a man hated by the gods. Yet those who had *aidōs* provided hospitality for me on a table set apart for myself. One roof sheltered us, but they sat silently, so that I became speechless and asked no share of their feast. Their own cups they filled to the brim for every one alike, and had their pleasure. And I?—I ventured not to blame my friends; in silence I suffered, and made as though I heard not, saw not—and groaned aloud, the murderer of my mother.”

Here the *aidōs* both bids, and forbids, at the inner compulsion of the unwritten laws: the law of the stranger and guest-friend bids offer hospitality, the law of the most sacred of family ties bids hold aloof.

(5) The last scene leads us again naturally to that aspect of the *aidōs* which may best be described as right feeling towards relatives. This is happily illustrated in the *Iphigenia in Aulis*, a drama which will afford within itself nearly all the remaining examples which we require to bring forward.

In the quarrel between the Atreidæ, Agamemnon says that he will not answer the reproaches of Menelaus haughtily, but “more wisely, for,” he adds (*Iph. Aul.*, 376), “thou art my brother, and a good man loves reverence

<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, p. 248.

(*aideisthai*),” i.e. a good man has such a regard for family ties as will restrain all presumption. Agamemnon, therefore, resolves to reason with Menelaus gently, and not from his vantage-ground as commander-in-chief.

(6) *Noblesse oblige*.—In the same drama, when Agamemnon finally realises that he will be compelled to sacrifice Iphigenia, he describes the mental struggle which he is enduring as a contest between two different impulses of the *aidōs*: “O lowly birth!” he exclaims (*Iph. Aul.*, 446), “what great advantages dost thou possess! To thee is granted easily the right to weep, to speak out all in freedom. But to the high-born, *this* were a disgrace. In the front rank of life we stand and bear this burden, slaves to the multitude. I am ashamed (*aidoumai*) to weep, and again I am ashamed (*aidoumai*) not to weep.” Agamemnon is torn between his feeling as a father and that *noblesse oblige* which compels him as one in high position, standing out before the crowd “in the front rank of life,” to hide what he feels and make the awful sacrifice cheerfully. The *aidōs* here again both bids and forbids.

(7) Again, as honourable shame the *aidōs* is that sense of modesty which shrinks into itself, recoiling from the reproach of impurity.

(a) In this significance *aidōs* appears in the *Medeia* (439. See *ante*, p. 468). When Jason breaks his doubly-plighted troth to Medeia, the world is said to be turned upside down—“*aidōs* hath flown back to heaven.”

The *aidōs* appears also in the *Hippolytus* as innocence, in the beautiful little allegory of the untrodden meadows sacred to Artemis (Chastity. See p. 456).

(b) In this sense also must be interpreted the delightful little scene in the *Iphigenia in Aulis* (801 *et seq.*), in which Achilles makes the acquaintance of Clytemnestra. The queen and her daughter, Iphigenia, have just arrived in the Greek camp at Aulis, whither they have been lured by Agamemnon under the pretence that Achilles has sought the hand of the maiden in marriage and wishes to celebrate the nuptials before the sailing of the fleet for Troy. With very different intent has Iphigenia been summoned to Aulis, for it is her father's resolve to offer her in sacrifice to Artemis; but Achilles knows nothing either of Agamemnon's real purpose or of the base use that has been made of his name. Iphigenia and her mother are equally in the dark, and the scene to which we now direct attention follows immediately upon a stormy interview between Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, in which the king has vainly endeavoured to induce his wife to depart from Aulis and return to her home in Argos. This Clytemnestra positively refuses to do; she, and none other, she vows, shall carry the torch before her daughter in the nuptial procession; this is her prerogative, a ceremony devolving upon her as the mother of the bride. Agamemnon retires discomfited to consult with Calibas, the seer, and Clytemnestra withdraws into the house.

Presently the quiet is broken by the appearance of one who little dreams that his presence is anxiously desired, Achilles, the unconscious “bridegroom,” who demands loudly to see the commander-in-chief: will no one let him know that Achilles, the son of Peleus, stands before his gates?

Achilles is excited, and bent upon bringing certain grievances to the ear of Agamemnon; but his rehearsal of what he means to say to the king of men is cut short by the appearance of a vision of grace and beauty, before which the youthful hero is struck dumb. Never in old Cheiron's cave, never in camp or court, has such a sight met his astonished gaze as that which he now beholds. Needless to say, it is Clytemnestra who comes forth, beaming with satisfaction at the opportunity thus unexpectedly afforded her of becoming acquainted with her future “son-in-law.”



"Son of the Nereid-goddess," she says, "I heard thy words within the house, and am come forth to greet thee."

"O divine *aidōs*!" (*O potnia aidōs*) stammers Achilles, who really believes that he beholds the divinity in person, "is it a woman that I see, endowed with beauty so glorious?" (Clytemnestra, be it remembered, is the sister of Helen, the most beautiful woman in the world.)

"'Tis not surprising that thou knowest us not, for we have never met," the queen replies, adding graciously, in return for the youth's homage to her own charms, "Thee do I commend for that thou honourest understanding"—a compliment which implies that, although they have never met, Clytemnestra knows all about her visitor, his manner of life, and his old master Cheiron.

"Who art thou?" pursues Achilles in his downright way, "and wherefore art thou come to the camp of the Achæans—a woman, amongst armed men who bear the shield?"

"I am the daughter of Leda," replies the queen with no little dignity; "my name is Clytemnestra, and my consort—King Agamemnon."

Achilles perceives that he stands before the highest lady in the land, and makes his obeisance in his own soldierly fashion, paying the queen what he conceives to be the highest of compliments:—

"Thou hast told me what is necessary," he says, "well and briefly. I hate to bandy words with women," with which candid addition he prepares to take his leave.

"Stay!" cries Clytemnestra, advancing towards him, "why wilt thou go? Take my right hand in thine, as the beginning of a happy married life."

Achilles retreats in horror. All the warnings of old Cheiron rise up before him, as he realises that he confronts the sister of Helen.

"What sayest thou?" he exclaims, "I take *thy* right hand? Truly, I should be *ashamed* before Agamemnon, were I to touch that to which I have no right."

It is the *aidōs* which speaks here, that reverence for another man's wife which was lacking in Paris when he "looked straight into the eyes of Helen." "Loving, they loved, and fled."—Achilles, the Hellenic, is in all respects the antipodes of the Phrygian hero. He will not so much as touch the hand of Agamemnon's consort—it is not *themis*, not allowed to him. Clytemnestra, of course, endeavours to persuade Achilles that it is most certainly *themis* for him to take the hand of his mother-in-law-to-be—but Achilles imagines that she has lost her wits. For all the details of the *dénouement* we must refer the reader to the drama itself.

(c) Another beautiful example of the *aidōs* appears later in the same scene. When—through the intervention of an old slave, who is privy to Agamemnon's secret—Clytemnestra and Achilles have been made aware of the father's intention in regard to Iphigenia, the hero promises (*Iph. Aul.*, 973 *et seq.*), in response to the mother's agonised appeal, to do his utmost to save the maiden from the fate awaiting her. "To thee I seemed a great god—I, who am but a mortal,—and yet—a god I will become—for thee," says the young man in the ardour of his indignation against Agamemnon and the deceit which has been practised on the unfortunate ladies.

With tearful gratitude Clytemnestra accepts his proffered aid, and asks with hesitation whether it will be necessary for Iphigenia to follow the usual custom and entreat him personally (as a suppliant).

"Wilt thou that she shall clasp thy knee as suppliant?—This befitteth not a maiden," says the mother (*ibid.*, 992). "Nevertheless, if it seem good to

thee, she shall come hither, and *preserve her free glance through modesty* (*aidōs*). But if *I* can do this for her, let her remain within, for she payeth heed to what is maidenly (*semna* = sacred). Nevertheless, we must, as far as possible, show respect where it is due." Clytemnestra means that, if necessary, Iphigenia will not fail to show the customary tokens of respect to her protector.

Achilles replies with the innate tact and fine feeling of the true gentleman:—

"Bring not thy daughter to my sight, lady," he says, "lest we come under the tongue of the ignorant. The army assembled here, away from cares of home, and idle, loves scandal and foul-mouthed gossip. To me it is the same whether you come to me as suppliants (technically) or not. For *one* thing only I shall strive—to free you from these troubles. And know *one* thing as to myself—I never say what is untrue. Rather than be found a liar and an empty boaster unto thee, I would prefer to die. But die I would not, an I could save thy daughter."

It would be hard to match the foregoing for real chivalry of feeling in any modern work. The *aidōs* alone restrains the poet from bringing Achilles and Iphigenia together on the stage as protector and suppliant. Euripides has all the materials here for a most effective scene—the maiden appearing in her bridal dress—summoned to meet him whom she has been led to expect as her bridegroom—learning the truth of the situation, and clasping the knees of the "bridegroom" to implore deliverance from a terrible death: all this could have been worked out dramatically so as to earn the applause of the thousands assembled in the theatre. But Euripides, with rare self-control, puts the temptation from him—*noblesse oblige*; and his Achilles comes down to our day as the type of the *aidōs in man*—noble, manly, self-respecting, and respecting the self-respect of others.

(*d*) The *aidōs in woman*, as understood by Euripides, shows itself a little later in the drama. Iphigenia is alone with her mother, when suddenly she starts in affright:—

"Mother!" she exclaims (*Iph. Aul.*, 1338 *et seq.*), "I see a crowd of men approaching!" She knows that Agamemnon has just gone to complete the preparations for the sacrifice, and imagines that her last hour is come.

Clytemnestra tries to reassure her: "It is the son of the goddess, child, for whom (as bride) thou didst come hither."

This information brings to the poor child a terror worse than the first.

"Open the door, maidens," she cries in dismay, "that I may hide myself!"

"Why wilt thou flee, child?" asks the mother.

"I am disgraced (*aischynomai*) in the sight of this Achilles."

"But why?"

"This wretched marriage brings me shame (*aidōs*)," replies Iphigenia.

Here the recollection that she has exulted in the idea of the union with the goddess-born—that she has come to the camp to give herself to a man who had never so much as bestowed a thought upon her—rushes upon the unfortunate girl like a whirlwind. The whole *aidōs* of her nature—maidenly reserve, modesty, self-respect—has been wantonly trifled with; and her one desire is to fly from the presence of the man in whose eyes she thinks she has been degraded. It is not until Clytemnestra bids her stay, with the stern reminder: "This is no time for such refinements," that she consents to remain and face the hero in whose strong arm lies her only hope of deliverance.

It would be easy to supply other illustrations of the *aidōs*, but the fore-

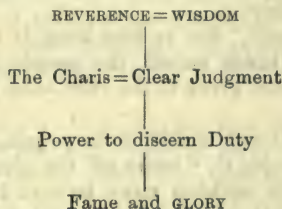


going will, perhaps, suffice to show something at least of the nature of this delicate, subtle, truly Hellenic characteristic. One passage alone remains to be quoted here. It occurs in the same great drama which has already furnished so many examples, and is spoken by the chorus, who here undoubtedly represent the true mind of the poet (*Iph. Aul.*, 563 *et seq.*):—

“REVERENCE is wisdom. She hath a changeful charm, and knoweth of her own clear insight that which is right, whence cometh to the life a glory and a fame that dieth not.”

Golden words! linking together as in one strong chain the noblest aspirations of the Hellene—reverence, wisdom, charm, clear insight, duty, glory.

To the Greek as to the Hebrew, REVERENCE (*to aideisthai*) is the beginning of wisdom (*sophia*), the root whence springs that indescribable *grace of character* (*charēs*) which reveals itself amid all the “changes” and chances of this mortal life, and enables its possessor to discern (*esoran*) of his own clear judgment (*hypo gnōmas*) that which is fitting and rightful = *duty* (*to deon*), whence cometh to the life unfading fame (*kleos agēraton*) and GLORY (*doxa*).



Such, in Euripides’ own “clear judgment,” is the natural process of evolution of the old Hellenic ideals. Could anything be more beautiful?

## IX.—THE IDEALS

1. *Equality*.—It would be strange indeed if, in a poet so truly representative as Euripides, we found no sympathy with the stirring political life of his day. The reverse is the case. The poet’s patriotism—his love for the fatherland and appreciation of the generous spirit of his countrymen—leavens his whole work. Especially do the democratic institutions of Athens commend themselves to his broad and liberal mind. That freedom of which Æschylus was the champion and the apostle presents itself to Euripides under the form of EQUALITY, *isotēs*, the law of fairness, of equal civic rights for all.

Our readers will recollect the passage recently quoted from the *Electra* (p. 478), in which the poet declares that it is impossible to tell what a man is, essentially and in himself, from his surroundings—the accidents of birth, high or low—of state, wealth or poverty—of bodily condition, strength or weakness. It is MIND alone, he argues, that makes the real difference between man and man, and mind revealing its quality in its dealings with men. Mind, however, before it has had scope for action, is an invisible quantity, and it is impossible to tell in whom it may be lodged. Hence it is equally impossible to assign its possession to any privileged class, since it may be revealed in the poor as in the rich, in the weak as in the strong; and this consideration it is which lies at the root of our poet’s doctrine of equality or fairness.

“Equality,” he says elsewhere, “is Nature’s law for man”<sup>1</sup>—the norm

<sup>1</sup> Donner’s version (*Phœn.*, 538) = *Gleichheit ist der Menschheit Urgesetz*.

state of things. Euripides nowhere asserts that men are born either equal in intellect or to equal fortune. This, as we have seen, he expressly denies, but he does maintain that all men have equal rights as citizens. F.L.L.

This is only the natural development of the doctrine of Herodotus that freedom is as necessary to man as the air which he breathes. He is born to freedom as his natural condition; but freedom is only secured by equal laws, laws which contemplate all as on an equal footing in regard to justice.

"There's nothing more disastrous to the State than tyranny," says our poet (in that most patriotic of his dramas, the *Suppliants*, 429), "where that which is the highest—the common law for all (*nomoi koinoi*)—does not exist; but one hath ta'en possession of the law, and ruleth, a law unto himself, and banisheth equality (*to ison*). But where the laws are written, the poor man and the rich have equal justice, and the weak, if right is on his side, bears off the victory from the strong."

These words are put into the mouth of the hero Theseus, who is contrasting the condition of Athens, where the people had a voice in the Government, with that of Thebes under the Tyranny. Of course they are applicable only to the Athens of the poet's own day.

"No one man ruleth here," the patriot-king is made to say (*Suppl.*, 403). "The State is free—the *Demos* ruleth, the people hold office by the year in turns. Neither is preference given to the rich—the poor hath equal civic rights (*to ison*)."

Throughout Euripides is on the side of the people. "One man, the general," he says in the *Andromache* (693), "bears off the glory and the fame," and yet the one has oftentimes done nothing more to earn it than the thousands who have shared the danger with him; are (it may be) a thousandfold wiser than the leader, and are scarcely heard of. The sympathy of the poet is, then, clearly with the people, and yet he is by no means blind to the faults of King *Demos*.

That he knew his countrymen thoroughly is evident from the passage in the *Orestes* (696), where the people, roused to anger, are compared to fire. But (hints the poet), if a leader has the wit to wait until the fire has burnt out, he can then do with them what he pleases, and turn them as he lists, "for," he adds, "in them compassion dwelleth, and a great soul (*thymos megas*)"—a beautiful touch, but no less true than beautiful.

Our poet knows equally well, however, the evil resulting from this very temperament. In every great aggregate of men, he says (*Hek.*, 606), there is the "undisciplined crowd" (the *akolastos ochlos*), whose boldness passes so easily into an "anarchy stronger than fire," than that fire which may safely be allowed to burn itself out.

The description, again, of the sea-army, the soldier-sailors of Agememnon in the *Iphigenia in Aulis* (914), as "hard to govern, bold to evil, but *apt for good, when they will*," is clearly applicable to such a community as the sea-faring population of the Peiræus—at all times bold, fickle, and hard to hold in check; but with the element of good predominating when the right leader had come to the front.

Nor is Euripides blind to the defects of the democratic institutions of which he is so proud—witness the allusions (*Suppl.*, 420) to the risk of ignorant, narrow-minded men being allowed to hold office—men who have had no opportunity of acquiring the habit of looking at things from the broad standpoint necessary for the common weal. Witness also the descriptions (*Hec.*, 130; *Suppl.*, 240) of the demagogue, the flatterer of King *Demos* (the *democharistēs*), the wily-minded orator (*poikilophrōn*), fawning on the people with sweet words, and urging them on to be pricks and thorns in the side of the rich. Witness further the



allusions in the *Iphigenia in Aulis* (*Iph. Aul.*, 336, 25), to the weary efforts necessary to get into office, and the constant friction after the fortunate candidate has obtained the coveted post—"the many opinions of men hard to please," wearing away—*lit.* "grating away"—by little and little the happiness of life. Witness, once more, the testimony of the *Ion* (595) to the intensity of the envy and jealousy of the baser sort, when a man has arrived at the object of his desires, and has succeeded in securing a place "among the rowers on the first bench" of the ship of the state—rendering the position of those in power so intolerable that "the best men—those who really have the ability to guide the helm—hold aloof from public affairs, and laugh among themselves at any one who is fool enough to seek office in a city so full of danger."

That these pictures are not too highly coloured, there is abundant evidence in contemporary history to show. Witness, finally, our poet's warnings (*Her. Fur.*, 30, 272 further) against that "sickness" of the body politic—faction and revolt—as leading, necessarily and inevitably, to the snatching of power by the one:—

"When the fierce breath of the storm assails the ship," say the chorus in the *Andromache* (479), "and opinions are divided as to the guiding of the helm, one man—albeit weaker in wit—if acting with autocratic power, is better than a multitude of wise men, if the favourable moment for saving the ship is to be seized."

These, then, are the dangers to which the ship of the democracy is exposed—the demagogue, the ignorant man in power, envy, hatred, and jealousy—the "sickness" of faction and revolt. Euripides sees them all clearly, and yet he holds to his ideal. Equality before tyranny—before, even, the rule of the one capable man! But, as a God-given prophet, he shows his countrymen what the true ideal is, and how it is to be reached. The equality of Euripides, it cannot be too emphatically pointed out, is not equality in worldly goods, in intellect, in strength or fame. Such an equality, if desirable, is not attainable in the present life. Our poet sees this clearly, and therefore he restricts his aims to *equality in civic rights*, and he shows most unmistakably that this can only be permanently preserved to the state by *equality in service*. The possession of equal privileges brings with it equal duties. Each in his place must *SERVE*, and serve without grudging.

This doctrine is inculcated in a very striking passage in the *Phœnician Women*—a passage put, by the way, like so many of the best thoughts of this so-called "woman-hater," into the mouth of a woman, Jocaste, wife of Œdipus and Queen of Thebes.

The interest of the drama<sup>1</sup> centres in the quarrel between Eteocles and Polyneikes, the two sons of Œdipus. To avoid the curse (of mutual destruction) pronounced against them by their father, they have agreed not to dwell together, but to reign by turns in Thebes, each for the space of one year. Eteocles accordingly assumes the sceptre, and Polyneikes in his voluntary banishment repairs to the court of Adrastus, King of Argos, whose daughter he marries. At the end of his year of office, however, Eteocles refuses to give up the sovereignty, and Polyneikes, with the help of his father-in-law, forms the memorable league of the seven princes, and marches against his native city, which is encompassed, when the drama opens, by his sevenfold army. Before hostilities actually commence, however, Jocaste, the unhappy mother of the

<sup>1</sup> The scene of the *Phœniissæ* is Thebes, and the play takes its name from the chorus, Phœnician maidens who have been sent from Tyre by their countrymen as an offering to Apollo, to serve, that is, in the temple at Delphi. On their way thither the war of the Seven against Thebes breaks out, and they are detained in the city.

disputants, in the hope of effecting a reconciliation, summons them both to meet her in a secret interview, and bids each state his grievance.

So far, what meets the eye in the narrative; but we must pause for a moment here to point out that, in Euripides' hands, the old story of the quarrel between the brothers becomes an allegory or parable (*Phœn.*, 69). This is evident from the new feature which he introduced into it, viz. the tenure of power for a year by each alternately. Of this the oldest tradition knew nothing<sup>1</sup>; but in Euripides' version, the yearly tenure is the basis of the compact between the brothers. When we recollect that this arrangement held good of civic appointments in Athens, and is alluded to by our poet in the lines with which we are already familiar as that which made the difference between freedom and tyranny (*Suppl.*, 403. See *ante*)—"The State is free; the Demos ruleth; the people hold office *by the year in turns*; neither is preference given to the rich; the poor hath equal civic rights;" we can hardly fail to perceive that the two sons of Œdipus are merely personifications of the two rival parties in the State. The deadly quarrel between the brothers is thus a representation of that deadly civil war among brethren which was going on all over Hellas—the struggle for the mastery between autocrats and democrats, between the "fat men" and the poor of Herodotus, between the notables and the Demos of Thucydides.

We are now in a position to take up the thread of the narrative—understanding by the name "Eteocles" the party *in*, by that of "Polyneikes" the party *out* of office, and so out of power.

The statement of Polyneikes is brief: "The word of truth," he says (*Phœn.*, 469), "is simple," and the truth is, that he has been defrauded of his just rights. He has kept out of the land (not interfered) for a year; but now his brother has broken the solemn compact, and refuses to give him his share of the common inheritance. He himself has acted in good faith throughout—to this he can call the gods as witnesses—and he is ready to withdraw his forces, if he is met with justice, to rule peaceably for his year, and then to resign and give place to his brother for an equal period.

"To me," says the chorus, the impartial bystanders—"even if I have not been reared in Hellas, amid Hellenic institutions")—"thou seem'st to speak with understanding."

It is now the turn of Eteocles (the man in power, the party actually in possession of the sweets of office) to speak. He begins (*Phœn.*, 499) with the sophistical argument that if the same thing appeared noble and wise to all men, there would be no strife on earth.<sup>2</sup> There is, he contends, nothing really "shared alike" (*homoion*), nothing really "equal" (*ison*), amongst mortals—"share alike" and "equality" are only names, not facts. He confesses himself not ashamed to say openly, that there is nothing he would not do for power. He would strive upwards, if he could, to the rising of the sun and stars, downwards to earth's innermost recess, if, by so doing, he could win over to himself the greatest of divinities—supremacy and power (the tyranny). This best of all goods he will yield to no one—nay, he will keep it for himself. "To give up 'the more,' accept 'the less'—this were cowardice!" Eteocles concludes his speech with the cynical remark: "If sin one must, to sin for power is grandest. In other things be pious!"

<sup>1</sup> Hesiod (*Works and Days*, 162) merely says that they quarrelled over the flocks of Œdipus, and Sophocles (*Ed. Col.*, 1292 *et seq.*) makes the strife begin by the seizure of the crown by the younger, Eteocles, whereupon Polyneikes seeks to enforce his superior right to it as the elder.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Shakespeare, "There's nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so."



The white-haired mother (maturity of wisdom) then takes the word, and answers Eteocles out of his own mouth (*Phœn.*, 528):—

"My son!" she says, "not everything is evil that appertaineth to old age; for experience hath that to say which is wiser than the thoughts of youth. Why yield thyself to Philotimia (ambition), this worst of deities? Flee *her*, my son! the goddess is unjust. To many a home, to prosperous states, hath she come, and gone—destroying those who worshipped her. And for *her* thou ravest! 'Twere nobler, son, didst thou show honour to the common right. Fair dealing—that bindeth ever friend to friend, state unto state, ally to ally. Equality of rights is Nature's law for man. He who keeps more (than his fair share) hath ever in the weaker an adversary, keen to begin the day of enmity. Equality it is that sets in order for mankind measure and weight, the balance and the rule—equality that number set apart from number.<sup>1</sup>

"Yea, the dark eyelid of the night, the sun's bright light, perform their yearly course with equal step, and neither is jealous of the other's victory. If, then, day and night alike serve mortals, and thou wilt not content thyself with thine own portion, and give him his—where is justice?

"Why honour'st thou thus to such excess the tyranny—this sweet injustice—and deem'st it something grand to be gazed on by the multitude? Empty vanity!

"Or seekest thou to heap up many goods, and therewith many sorrows? What is the more? Only a name. ENOUGH sufficeth for the wise.

"Of our own selves," concludes the mother, "we mortals can own nothing. We do but have the care of what the gods bestow, and when they will, they take it back again."

The beautiful thoughts of Jocaste require but little comment. They may briefly be paraphrased thus:—

(1) Equality of rights is Nature's *Urgesetz* for man. Only where fairness is observed can there be lasting union between friend and friend, state and state, ally and ally.

(2) But, community in rights=community in service. Day and night share time equally between them; but far from desiring to lord it over mortals, each takes office only to serve. Each in turn serves mortals (*douleui brotois* = is slave to mortals). Equality in privilege = equality in bearing the burden.

The concluding words prove how very closely Euripides' ideal of equality is allied to the grand Hellenic instinct (if we may so call it) of moderation. Only when all hold fast the golden mean will there be true equality.

(3) What is the more? asks the philosopher—that "more" which, according to Eteocles, it were sheer cowardice to give up. An idle name—since no one can really use or enjoy *more* than ENOUGH. This sufficeth for the wise.

(4) After all, concludes the poet, why quarrel over nothing? We mortals really possess nothing—what we seem to possess we only hold as stewards for the gods, and when they will, they claim their own again.

Have we not in the whole chain of reasoning the germs of much that ripened later in Greek thought, and found fullest fruition in the philosophy of our LORD and His apostle, Paul of Tarsus? Never were mutual rights and mutual service fully understood until set forth in the doctrine of the Christian brotherhood, the true social compact.

2. *Compassion*.—Strange as it may appear, the next ideal of our poet is very closely connected with the last. Given the conviction that all men are

<sup>1</sup> The principle, *i.e.* that all have equal rights, or that all are entitled to a fair share, first led to equal division of land or goods by measure, weight, and number.

intended by Providence to have equal rights and an equal share of a modest happiness, the evidence that the rights of the weak are often flagrantly disregarded by the strong—that happiness is often wrecked through no fault of the individual—cannot but create in a thinking mind a profound sense of compassion. The greater the inequality, and the deeper the misery endured, the more intense is the pity inspired in the heart of the one who “knows-with,” and feels with, the sufferer.

The description which Euripides gives of the Hellenes—that in them dwelt “pity (*oiktōs*) and a great soul”—is applicable beyond all others to himself. Euripides alone of all the thinkers of antiquity, seems to have caught the living spark of pity, and kept it burning in the world until the advent of the Divine Compassion Himself.

In his fellow-feeling for the outcasts of society—the slave, the “barbarian,” the captive, the sick, the erring, Euripides is the greatest forerunner of the CHRIST. The philosophers of Greece, strange to say, lag (in this respect) far behind the poet whom some of them affected to despise. Their very philosophy had a tendency to detach them from philanthropy, and it is in this connection that Euripides utters one of his most pregnant warnings: “Pity,” he says in the *Electra* (294), “dwelleth never with the fool, but in the breast of the wise among men; and,” he adds, “there is a danger in being overwise,” *i.e.* in that so-called wisdom which bade men steel their hearts against all tender feeling, and become, as far as possible, passionless.

The contrast between Euripides and such thinkers as, even, Plato and Aristotle, is best seen in the attitude which they assume, respectively, towards slavery. To the philosophers named, the slave is little better than a machine, a “tool-with a soul,” or a troublesome animal to be kept in order by the whip, if need be. (See further under the articles *Plato*, *Aristotle*.) To our poet the slave is a MAN, with all the attributes of man, to be treated as a reasonable, thinking being. His “slavery,” in Euripides’ eyes, is his misfortune, not his fault—it has not unmanned him, nor put him beyond the bounds of human society. To the slave Euripides says virtually, like St. Paul, “Art thou a slave? Care not for it! Thou art still a man” (one of those whom the Creator severed and set apart from the brutes by giving to them understanding.—See *ante*, p. 84). “One thing alone,” he says in the *Ion* (854), “brings shame upon a slave—the name. In all else he is no whit inferior to the free man, if he be good.” And it is by the mouth of a slave that he draws the noble distinction between slavery of the body and slavery of the soul, a distinction with which we afterwards become so familiar in Plato. “If I have not the name of free man,” says the old slave of Menelaus in the *Helena* (730), “at least my MIND is free, and better is this than to be subject to two evils—to have at once a bad mind” (to be slave to one’s self), “and to be slave to one’s neighbour.”

Certainly Euripides is not blind to the faults which slavery inevitably engenders in its victims—witness the remark in the *Electra* (632), that it is “characteristic of slaves to go over to the winning side.”

Nevertheless, the examples among his *dramatis personæ* of slaves who pursue the opposite course, and are ready to die for their master’s house, show how deeply he felt that nobility of soul was not incompatible with the lot of the slave. There is a beautiful touch of this sort, doubtless taken from life, in the *Children of Heracles* (678), where the *penestēs* (or serf) of Hyllus, who has been sent to inform Alcmenē of the arrival of her grandson, declares that he must hasten back—the battle is about to begin, and he would not have his



lord face the foe alone (*eremos*, deserted by him). One is glad that in the end the noble fellow obtains his freedom.

Then, as to the captive—who, before Euripides, ever thought out so earnestly the hard and bitter consequences of war, the horrors which it brings in its train?—Who ever felt so deeply the misery of the rude awakening, when free men and free women found themselves suddenly reduced to that position which was worse than death—the place of a chattel, absolutely at the disposal of an irresponsible master?—The feelings surging in the breast of the unfortunates on whom the day of captivity has dawned, are pathetically expressed in the *Trojan Women* (146, 176 *et seq.*). Old Hecabē leads the lament of the high-born prisoners (assembled in the tent of Agamemnon), “like a bird in fear for her young.” All is darkness and despair—no one knows what is before her, or what her fate will be.

“When do the ships of the Achæans sail, and bear us far hence?”—“Am I to die?”—“Of whom shall I be slave?”—“Shall I draw water from the spring?”—and other questions of a like nature burst involuntarily from the lips of the anxious terror-stricken group. But Hecabē can give no answer—to her, too, the future is a blank: “Shall I stand portress at the palace-gates?” she wonders, “or nurse the children of my lord?—I, who, once, as Troja’s queen, was honoured!”

Then finally comes the hurrying of the captives on board the Greek ships, whilst the cry of the children, separated from their mothers, goes up piteously: “O mother, mother! they are carrying me away—away in the black ship!—far from thine eyes!”

The hard lot of the captives, again, in a foreign land, is pitifully described in the *Andromache*—where the gentle heroine comes before us as the slave-wife of the son of Hector’s murderer—and above all, in the *Hecabē* (807), where the aged queen, on whom blow after blow has fallen, appears as Woe personified: “Look on me, as a painter looks,” she says to Agamemnon, “and behold what I suffer.”

“What’s Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba, that he should weep for her?” asks Hamlet. In the ancient world the sorrows of Hecuba, as set forth by Euripides, meant a great deal. The story goes that, after the disastrous collapse of the Sicilian Expedition, such of the Athenian prisoners confined in the quarries of Syracuse as could repeat the verses of Euripides, were set at liberty. Who can tell to how many unfortunate captives of the sword in later times the tragedies of the master, with their depth of pathos, brought at least a softening of their lot, some mitigation of their hardships?

Nor, in estimating the influence of Euripides over his countrymen, must it be forgotten that some of those for whom he sought to enlist his hearers’ sympathies were foreigners—“barbarians”—and as such, outside the pale of ordinary Greek compassion. True, we find in Euripides the sentiment that barbarians “cannot become friendly with Hellenes”; but this is put into the mouth of a “barbarian,” Hecabē herself (*Hec.*, 1199), and means that the speaker is quite aware of the existing prejudice against barbarians, quite aware also of the futility of any attempt to bridge over the gulf that lay between the two—between the free aspirations of the Greek on the one hand, and the habitual tendencies of those reared under despotic rule on the other.<sup>1</sup> Some courage, therefore, was necessary on the part of the poet to come before an Athenian and prejudiced audience with tragedies in which “barbarians” played the leading part, and were represented (as in the case of a Polyxena

<sup>1</sup> “Among barbarians all are slaves but One,” says Helen in the drama that bears her name (*Hel.*, 276).

and an Andromache) as possessing all the *charis* of body and soul that appertained to the highest Hellenic type of woman. Here, however, Euripides only follows the lead of Homer. Both poets were far removed from that patriotism falsely so-called, which is only another name for the pettiness of race animosity and jealousy.

We have already spoken of the tenderness which Euripides displays towards children (p. 436). This is nowhere more conspicuous than in the stand which he makes against an atrocious practice which prevailed even in historic times—that, namely, of slaying the infant sons of a vanquished and dead enemy. This was customary as a measure of precaution against the dangers of the blood-feud—the assumption that the sons, if allowed to grow to manhood, would seek to avenge their father's death. Instances of the practice meet us both in the *Heracleidæ* and in the *Madness of Heracles*. In the *Trojan Women* (740), the tragic episode of the death of Hector's only son, the little Astyanax, at the hand of the Greeks, is described with deep pathos. Nothing more beautiful than the lament of Andromache for her babe has ever been penned. The little "king" (by the advice of Odysseus) is torn from its mother's arms, where it lies nestling like a chick under the wings of the mother-hen, and dashed from the battlements of the ill-fated "city" over which it was born to rule.<sup>1</sup> Its shattered remains are brought back, as a special act of grace, to the grandmother, Hecabē, for burial. As she lays the little body ready for the grave upon its father's shield, which is to serve for coffin, the old queen turns to the Greek herald, and asks with withering emphasis (*Tro.*, 1189): "What will ye write upon his tomb?—'The Argives slew this child through fear'?—Truly, an epitaph of shame for Hellas!"—an epitaph, undoubtedly, that must have brought the unwonted flush to many a rough Greek amongst the poet's audience.

Turning now from the calamities of war to the ordinary troubles of daily life—sickness and poverty—we find that Euripides has an observant eye and a corner in his wide heart for these also. The great use of money, he tells us, is the power which it brings with it of helping others. This beautiful expression of pre-Christian thought is uttered by our poet's "noble soul," the husbandman who acts as guardian of Electra. When, in the course of the story, Orestes and his inseparable comrade, Pylades, appear, the good man—receiving them as strangers, and without knowing who they are—invites them to partake of a repast in his humble cottage. Electra thereupon, cumbered, after the fashion of women, with her notions of the much serving due to strangers evidently of high rank—reproaches him with his want of thought in offering hospitality to those greater than himself.

"Why not?" he replies, with truer refinement, "if they are really noble, as they seem to be, they will be content with little, as with much."

After Electra has retired to prepare the meal, however, the recollection of his poverty oppresses the worthy man, and he sighs, and says (*El.*, 426):—

"When I weigh the matter with myself, it is on occasions such as this that I see what great power lies in money—to enable one to give to friends and to bring back the sick to health. For daily needs one wants but little, and if a man's hunger be appeased, 'tis all the same whether he be rich or poor."

Here again is the doctrine of the mean—with an addition. "Enough sufficeth for the wise," says our poet in the *Phænissæ*: "The more is only a name."

"Yes," he adds in the passage before us, "enough sufficeth for *oneself*, but

<sup>1</sup> As the name denotes (*astu-anax*, city king).



—the more enableth one to give to others—to distribute to the stranger and the sick”—the Hellenic equivalent of the Hebrew “sick and needy.”

Finally, we must note another form of compassion to which Euripides was no stranger—compassion for the erring. This is mirrored in that most beautiful of Attic words, *syngnōmē* = *knowledge-with* (the offender, i.e. that all mortals are alike subject to frailty)—hence *fellow-feeling*, *allowance-for*, *forgiveness*, the attitude which best befits one mortal to assume towards another.<sup>1</sup>

A characteristic example of the way in which *syngnōmē* is put forward by our poet as a plea for compassion occurs in the *Suppliants*. When the Argive king, Adrastus, and the mothers of the heroes who had fallen before Thebes, solicit the help of Athens in the task of recovering the bodies of the dead, Theseus does not immediately grant their request. On the contrary, he puts Adrastus through a lengthy catechism as to the causes of the war, and then preaches to him a homily, pointing out the sins and follies which had led to the catastrophe (p. 452). All that Theseus says is severely true; but such a reproof, addressed by a younger and a happier man to one bowed down by years and adversity, is the final drop that makes Adrastus' cup of bitterness run over. He cannot contain his indignation, and retorts haughtily that he had not chosen Theseus to sit in judgment on his troubles—no! he had come to him as to a physician, that he might profit by his *help*—not his censure.

The chorus, however, chooses the wiser course of gentle remonstrance, and reminds Theseus of two facts which he is apparently overlooking:—

(1) “They sinned, these young men who have fallen,” plead the mothers (*hēmarton* = they missed the mark and failed)—“but this is natural to man, and for it there must be *syngnōmēn* = allowance made, excuse, forgiveness. [For thou, O king, art but a man, and, as such, prone to err, to fall under stress of circumstance.]”

(2) The second fact is based on the same great principle: “What wilt thou do?” continue the mothers, pressing home the question. “Wilt thou betray the suppliants, and thrust us from the land?—Nay! for the wild beast hath a hiding-place amongst the rocks, the slave a refuge in the altars of the gods—and city flees to city when storms arise—for,” they add emphatically, “*nothing amongst mortals continues prosperous to the end.*”

The mutability of fortune, then, the old Solonian warning, is pressed into the service, and Theseus is bidden *know-with* those in trouble, because his own day of adversity will surely come.

Needless to say, Theseus, the poet's second self, has long since learned the force of both arguments. The object of his lecture, ill-timed as it appears to Adrastus, is to prove to all concerned that, if he now goes up to Thebes, it is not as the *ally* of those who have defied the gods, but as the physician sent by them to remedy the wrong. That object effected, Theseus has nothing but *syngnōmēn* for the mourners, compassion for the dead.

This compassion he shows not only by risking his own life in the effort to recover the bodies, but by that right royal act, the washing of the wounds of the dead with his own kingly hand—a deed which excites the amazement and astonishment of Adrastus.

“Hadst thou been there,” says the messenger, who tells the story, and emphasises the fact that the duty had been committed to no slavish hands, “thou wouldst have seen how he loved them.”

“He washed—*himself*—the wounds of these unfortunates?” repeats Adrastus, as though unable to credit the tale.

<sup>1</sup> “Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us.”

"Yea, and spread out the bier, and veiled thereon the bodies of the dead."

"A fearful task for *him*, and—a *disgrace*," is the comment of Adrastus, the Alltagsmensch.

"Disgrace!" echoes the messenger with fine disdain, "*what disgrace can come to men through human suffering?*"

What, indeed? The picture of the hero-king, preparing with his own hand the bodies of his brethren for their last resting-place, will ever linger in the memory as a symbol and type of a yet more significant washing—that which took place in the upper room at Jerusalem by the Royal Hand of One who had emptied Himself of His glory, and taken upon Him the form of a slave—the realisation and embodiment of the poet's own belief (*El.*, 1329).

"Among the heavenly ones there is compassion for heavy-laden mortals."

(3) **Self-sacrifice.**—Needless to say; the highest ideal of our poet is, simply, compassion in its purest, most generous form—compassion so forgetful of self that it identifies its own personality with that of the sufferer—takes his place—becomes itself the burthen-bearer. Instances of this noblest development of the human spirit—that which we call self-abnegation, self-devotion, SELF-SACRIFICE—abound in the writings of Euripides. His own mind seems to have been, consciously and unconsciously, in closest affinity with it, so that he returns to the theme, as it were, instinctively. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."

Our readers will remember the passage in which Euripides expresses his own belief in the prevailing power of goodness, in its beneficent rule over the world (*ante*, p. 450, *Suppl.*, 195): "Oft have I contended with others," he says, "who strove to prove that evil among men was greater than the good. I hold the contrary opinion. There's more of blessing given to mortals than of ill. If it were not so, we should no longer see the light."

And yet there have been times in all periods of the world's history, times within the personal knowledge of each individual, when this "opinion" appears altogether optimistic. The very reverse seems to hold good. Does our poet at such times go back from the judgment formed in happier days? By no means, for he knows there is in existence a remedy—a something that can retrieve the position, make good the loss, set right the balance.

"When evil is stronger than the good," he says (*Phæn.*, 889), "there is ONE means of safety, and none other." Bitter it is for him on whom the duty falls of providing this one sovereign remedy—this *pharmakon*—but it brings healing to others, SAFETY to the State.

Needless to say, this remedy is—the sacrifice of self. Wherever evil is beginning to triumph amongst men—the ills of life to overcloud the good—this never-failing remedy is at hand—for him who has the courage to make use of it. Let but the ONE be found, the One with no thought of self, the One strong to labour, to lead, to endure even unto death—and straightway the powers of evil are worsted—THE GOOD resumes its sway upon the earth.

Who cannot verify from his own experience the truth of this grand doctrine? Who does not acknowledge that *self-sacrifice*—bitter medicine to the one who offers it—is the salt that keeps the moral world from decay? What great religious truth can we name, what great scientific fact, what great idea, what hope of struggling humanity, that has not had its martyr—one who has sacrificed *himself*—before the doctrine, the fact, the idea, became part of the universal heritage, or the hope passed into realisation?

That a people like the Hellenes realised intuitively the force of that universal law: "*The one must suffer for the many*," is manifest. Their early



sagas and traditions are full of it, and it is upon these that Euripides draws for his examples.

These belong to all the great branches of the Greek race—they are not confined to one. Thessaly is represented by Alcestis, by Achilles and Peleus; Argos by Macaria and Iolaus, by Evadne, by Iphigenia, Orestes, and Pylades; Thebes by Menœkeus; Athens by Theseus and his sons; Trézene by Hippolytus. Of these types, six are martyrs in will and intent, if not in deed: old Peleus risks his own life to save Andromache and her child; Achilles will withstand the whole united force of Hellas, that he may rescue Iphigenia; Theseus and his sons take up arms in defence of the great unwritten laws and on behalf of strangers of another nationality; Orestes and Pylades vie with one another for the honour of death, each seeking to lay down his life for the other; Iolaus, finally, the type of that rarest of friendships, friendship for the dead, spends and is spent for the children of Heracles.

The remainder prove their devotion by their death. One is a martyr to an idea—Hippolytus to the sacredness of the oath; Alcestis lays down her life for her husband—Macaria for her brothers—Menœkeus for the fatherland—Iphigenia for "great Hellas." The self-devotion in one and all is the same: "They loved not their lives unto the end;" but the object of the self-oblation broadens and widens out until it embraces the furthest bound to which a Greek owed fealty. Beginning with the nearest tie—the devotion of wife to husband—it finally includes within its scope all who (to use the old formula) "are of like blood, have like manners and customs, and worship the same gods." The enthusiasm of humanity in ancient times could no further go.

It is not at all probable that our poet planned his dramas with the deliberate intention of illustrating the doctrine in this way. Not so! these old sagas were of exceeding interest to him as exemplifying what he held to be noblest in human character, and he simply used them to suit his own artistic purpose.

## § XI.—HERODOTUS—I

WHEN we turn to the historians of Greece, we cannot fail to note that the impartiality of the chronicle seems to be provided for in the choice of the men selected to record it. In the case of Herodotus it is not without significance that he is of Asiatic birth—a native of Halicarnassus—belonging to neither of the peoples whose history mainly interests us. He occupies a neutral standpoint, and hence, when he praises or censures the actions of Spartan or Athenian, there is no reason to fear any undercurrent of race-sympathy or bias.

In Herodotus we meet for the first time in these pages with another development of the active Greek mind, thought clothing itself for practical purposes in the language of everyday life. Hitherto it is with the poets of Hellas alone that we have had to do. Now we have arrived at the first of a line of noble writers, for Herodotus is the father, not only of history, but of Greek literary prose. As in the case of poetry and philosophy, so do prose and the writing of history take their rise in Asiatic, not in European Greece, although it is in the latter that all four reach their highest development.

Herodotus was born about 480 B.C. in Halicarnassus, a city which had once formed part of the Dorian Hexapolis<sup>1</sup> of Asia Minor, but had been thrust out by the other five cities of the confederation thenceforward known as the Pentapolis.<sup>2</sup> He was by no means the first thinker of Hellas who had essayed to record the events of the past, nor yet the first prose writer, for in the former of these capacities he had been preceded by the poets, and in the latter by the logographers or chroniclers, such as Hecataeus and others, whose writings are now lost. In the attempts of the poets, however, the mythic element predominated too largely to satisfy the awakening consciousness of Hellas; and not only Herodotus, but the logographers (as the name *logographos* = narrator of facts, implies) would seem to have been moved to their task by the same impetus which urged on the philosophers, viz., the desire to find out the truth about things. What the philosophers attempted in the world of nature, the logographers endeavoured to do in the world of men. Herodotus himself calls his work a *Historia*—a narrative of what he had learned by inquiry—and the name could not have been better chosen. Of materials ready to hand for the writing of history in the modern sense, Herodotus had few, if any, at command. To the archives, official registers and documents, preserved in the temples of Egypt and other lands, access was denied; and even supposing that examination of them had been allowed, we cannot credit Herodotus with the knowledge necessary to decipher them. It is more than probable that he knew no language but his own. Herodotus was thus thrown back upon two channels of information—personal observation and what he could learn by “inquiry,” and the result of his use of both is set forth in his great and charming *Historia*.

The history of Herodotus is, therefore, literally, an “experiment.” True, he utilises the labours of the most famous of his predecessors, Hecataeus of Miletus, to whom on several occasions he expressly refers. In the main, how-

<sup>1</sup> Union of six cities.

<sup>2</sup> Union of five cities.



ever, the freshness and *naïveté* of his style are such as could only flow from a first-hand acquaintance with the men and manners, the lands and scenes which he describes. *Le style, c'est l'homme*, and one cannot but feel in reading Herodotus that his information has not been derived from books, from either parchment or papyrus, but gained by first-hand "inquiry," direct questioning of the persons most trustworthy and most likely to know the truth about things. Not that we can accept all that Herodotus tells us as "truth," he was far too dependent on others for that, but of this we may be certain, that he tells us honestly all that he himself knows.

Let us examine one or two features in the old master's method of conducting his inquiry, and see whether we are justified in making this statement or not.

(1) First, then, we note his fairness of presentation. Herodotus always takes care to put his readers on their guard where there happen to be several versions of the same story, and he often places the conflicting accounts fully before them,<sup>1</sup> in order that they may form a judgment for themselves. Instances of this abound. We select the following:—

(a) He relates that version of the wonderful career of Cyrus, his marvellous preservation, and his overthrow of the power of Cræsus, which is given "by those Persians who do not wish to embellish or magnify the history of Cyrus, but to tell the plain truth,"<sup>2</sup> although," he adds (i. 95), "I am well aware that there are three other ways of telling the story."

(b) He relates (iv. 11) three versions of the origin of the Scythian people, whilst pointing out the one which he himself considers the most probable.

(c) He gives (vii. 148 *et seq.*) three different accounts of the reasons which induced the Argives to remain neutral during the Persian invasion; and

(d) (*Ibid.*, 153 *et seq.*) Two explanations of the causes which kept Gelon of Syracuse from coming to the help of the mother-country.

(e) He gives (v. 45) two stories current about the connection of Dorieus with the Sybaritic War. Any one is at liberty to select that which he thinks most probable.

That this determination to bring forward every aspect of the subject proceeds neither from loquacity nor inability to sift evidence, but from a sheer sense of honour towards those who look to him for an unbiassed account, is abundantly evident. On one of the debatable points referred to above (the neutrality of the Argives), he says, "I am *bound* (*opheilo*) to relate all that is told, but," he adds (*ibid.*, 152), "I am by no means bound to believe all—let this remark apply to the whole history." The aim of Herodotus is at once to secure for his readers the same liberty of judgment which he claims for himself, and to prevent that judgment from being one-sided. "Hear the other side," is his own maxim, as well as that of the Athena of Æschylus.<sup>3</sup>

(2) Closely connected with this fairness of representation is the next feature which we note in Herodotus, viz., his impartiality. Impartiality, indeed, is the keynote of his history, the basis on which it rests, and it is struck in the opening words (i. 1), "This is a publication of the inquiry of Herodotus of Halicarnassus, in order that the actions of men may not be effaced by time, nor the great and wondrous deeds wrought, either by Hellenes or barbarians, become deprived of renown, and amongst other things for what cause they made war upon one another."

<sup>1</sup> Or, rather, in the first instance, before his hearers. The "history" was in all probability more often heard in public recitals than read. In those days readers were few, whilst hearers at the festivals could be reckoned on in thousands.

<sup>2</sup> *Ton conta logon* = that which actually is, *fact*.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 378.

The fact that they did "make war upon one another," and that the Hellenes suffered grievously at the hands of the "barbarian," does not blind Herodotus to any good points which the latter might possess. He agrees with Pindar that the great deeds even of an enemy are to be duly chronicled. Thus, if Herodotus notes the cruelty of a Darius or a Xerxes (iii. 159; iv. 84; vii. 38, 39), he also faithfully records the magnanimity of which each is capable on occasion (vi. 30, 41, 191; vii. 136). If he does not conceal his opinion that the Hellenes are now far above the barbarians in intelligence, "the Hellenic race," he says (i. 60), "has long been distinguished (literally, separated) from the barbarian, as being more quick-witted<sup>1</sup> and free from foolish simplicity"; he is also careful to point out how many things they had learnt in bygone days from these very "barbarians."<sup>2</sup>

When he turns to his own countrymen again, he brings forward innumerable instances of their readiness for self-sacrifice, their courage, their generosity, their real nobleness of nature, but his patriotism does not blind him to their faults. He openly ascribes the troubles of Hellas, not only to that which came upon her from without, what she suffered from the Persians, but to that which went on within, the disputes amongst her leading men for the possession of power, their accessibility to bribery, &c. (vi. 98). Nor, hard task though it must have been, does he shrink from recording the miserable result of these jealousies and rivalries, the disgraceful part played by Hellenes in hastening the invasion of their country. He shows us (v. 30 *et seq.*) the "fat" men of Naxos, the men of substance, when excited by the people, appealing to the Persian for help, and so bringing about the subjugation of the Isles of Greece, which up to that time had been free. He shows us the first Persian spies coming to view the land of Hellas led by a Greek physician, who, detained against his will at Susa, has deliberately planned an invasion of his native country in order to regain his own personal freedom (iii. 132). He shows us a Hippias and a Demaratus, representatives respectively of the two noblest nations of Hellas, Athens and Sparta, taking refuge with the Persian, and marching with the armies of the great king against their countrymen, that they may obtain revenge for personal injuries and satisfy personal ambition (v. 96; vi. 70). He shows us a Miltiades saving his country at Marathon, and then deceiving his countrymen and leading them to make war upon fellow-Hellenes, in order to gratify a personal grudge (vi. 132 *et seq.*). He shows us, finally, a Themistocles, saving his country at Salamis, and all the while playing a double part which, in the event of a defeat, would have secured for himself the favour of the Persian monarch (viii. 75, 109, 110).

In every way, and at the risk of wounding the vanity and exciting the anger of the different Hellenic peoples, Herodotus speaks the truth concerning them and their great men impartially.

(3) *Truthfulness—Sifting of Evidence.*—A third feature in this first experiment in the writing of history is the clear-sighted and clear-headed observation which Herodotus brings to bear upon his subject. He thinks himself bound to describe the various countries whose inhabitants figure in his pages; but he

<sup>1</sup> *Dexioteron* = more dexterous with (more ready to use the right hand) the mind.

<sup>2</sup> Thus, he mentions that the Lydians were the first to coin gold and silver (i. 94); he attributes the invention of geometry, or land-measuring, to the Egyptians, from whom, he says, it had passed to the Hellenes, whilst from the Babylonians they had derived the sundial and the division of the day into twelve hours (ii. 109); and he traces the letters of the Greek alphabet to the Phoenicians (v. 58), and the customs of wearing crests in helmets and placing devices and handles on shields to the Carians (i. 171). Indeed, in his desire to do justice to those without, Herodotus goes too far, as in his supposition that the names of the Greek gods and many of their religious observances were Egyptian in their origin (ii. G. 50 *et seq.*).



everywhere distinguishes between what he has himself seen of them and what he has learned about them from others.

So far as his own personal observation is concerned, Herodotus comes before us as a true precursor of our own men of science. The priests of Egypt inform him that the Nile delta had been "acquired" by the Egyptians, and Herodotus gives it as his own opinion that it had once been a bay of the sea, filled up in the course of thousands of years by alluvial deposits brought down by the river. This opinion he bases on strictly scientific reasoning—the character of the soil and the fact that shells were found on the neighbouring mountains (ii. 10–12). Again, his description of the plain of Thessaly, with his surmise (vii. 129) that the gorge through which the Peneius makes its way to the sea is the result of an earthquake, is accepted by geologists at the present day. To the general truthfulness of his picture of Egypt the monuments of the land still bear witness.

The information, on the other hand, which he derives from others is invariably prefaced by a *phasi* = "they say," "it is said"; and several of these *on dits*, formerly ridiculed as "travellers' tales," have been confirmed by recent research and exploration.<sup>1</sup> That Herodotus always attains to truth in his guesses at science cannot for a moment be affirmed; but neither can we say that the statements of Aristotle—the typical Greek man of science—are invariably correct. What we may fairly claim for Herodotus is that he endeavours to approach his subject in the true scientific spirit—wherever it is practicable inquiring into the truth of things and trying to find out "the cause." His ethnographical and geographical lore has little to do with our own inquiry, but it is well for us to note the way in which he deals with these subjects, for we have in it a pledge that he will take equal, if not greater, pains to ensure accuracy in his statements regarding things of yet higher importance.

Our examination of the method employed by Herodotus in conducting his investigation, then, warrants us in believing that he has really set before us a fair, all-round, impartial and accurate account (so far as his own knowledge goes) both of his countrymen and of the "barbarians" with whom they came into contact. This is the substantial contribution made to our present subject by the "experiment" of the genial old father of history.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> As, e.g., his account of the African pygmies (ii. 32). That some of his "travellers' tales" are and must always remain mere fables should not be put down as an evidence of credulity on the part of Herodotus. In retailing the stories (folk-lore) current among the peoples whom he visited, he is only following out his self-imposed rule: "I am bound to relate all that is told, but I am by no means bound to believe all."

In another place, regarding a mythos of the Egyptians, he says: "Those to whom such statements appear credible may believe them; my object in my whole history is to write what I hear concerning everything" (ii. 123).

It is amusing to find him explaining one of the current stories quite in modern fashion. "The Scythians report," he says, "that in the parts behind the most northerly of the inhabited districts of their country the air is full of feathers"—these "feathers" Herodotus interprets as "snow" (iv. 7, 31).

<sup>2</sup> An objective guarantee that Herodotus is telling the truth about his own countrymen is to be found in the miserable rivalries of the different peoples of Hellas. A Lacedæmonian or a Theban, e.g., would not have allowed praise of Athens to pass unchallenged had it been false or even exaggerated. Similarly, any want of accuracy in his statements about Sparta would have been seized upon by the Argives. It must be remembered that, if the story can be accepted as genuine, the History of Herodotus was first published (i.e. publicly read) at the Olympian games, where representatives of all the Hellenic peoples were congregated. The only point to which exception seems to have been taken, however, is the account of the discussion by the Persians concerning the best form of government.

## THE IDEA OF GOD AS FOUND IN HERODOTUS

The theology of Herodotus presents two very striking features—the first is connected with his conception of the Divine, the other with his philosophy of history.

(1) In his idea of God, Herodotus, like Xenophanes, breaks with the current anthropomorphic traditions. He says openly that Homer and Hesiod made the Greek theogony. His words are: "Whence each of the gods sprang, whether they have all existed always, and in what form they exist—this was not known until, so to speak, yesterday or the day before. For I consider that Homer and Hesiod lived about 400 years before my time; not more; and it is they who made a genealogy of their gods (*theo-gonia*) for the Hellenes, and gave to these gods their names, and distributed honours and arts amongst them, and stamped their forms" (ii. 53).

Herodotus is not literally correct, as we know, in saying that Homer and Hesiod made the Greek theogony, for these poets only represent the final stage of a long process of development. Nevertheless, if we substitute the words "human fancy" for "Homer and Hesiod," and read "human fancy made the Greek theogony," we have the thought which Herodotus intended to convey. The statement is the more remarkable as coming from one whose whole mind is permeated by the idea of a Power more than human controlling and leading the destinies of men. Herodotus breaks, indeed, with anthropomorphic notions, but he does not cast away the idea of God any more than did Xenophanes or Anaxagoras. He believes most firmly in the Divine Power, which he speaks of habitually as *to Theion* = the Divinity;<sup>1</sup> but he does not believe that the Greek theogony has any claim to be regarded as the representative of that power. The Greek theogony is only a local manifestation of the belief in that Divine power. Herodotus has travelled much, visited many countries, and seen for himself many forms of religion.<sup>2</sup> Everywhere he finds a belief in a power more than human; the outward expression which that belief takes is the local or national religion. To the Greek, the Divine enshrines itself in human form; to the Egyptian, the animal world affords its symbols of deity; to Herodotus, the Divine is in neither, but behind and above them.

To this feeling—that God is something different and distinct from all human conceptions regarding Him—we must attribute the great reticence shown by Herodotus in speaking of religious subjects (ii. 3, 65, 170, 171). He does not consider that they form a fit subject for discussion—"Let these things be as they have even been," is his formula (ix. 65).

To this feeling also must be ascribed his tolerance; he holds that any one who wilfully ridicules the religious beliefs or the established customs of another nation is nothing short of a madman (ix. 65).

Another reason, of course, for the silence of Herodotus is probably to be sought in the not unnatural desire to avoid sharing the fate of Anaxagoras and being banished as an "atheist." Herodotus is no atheist, but his own ideas of the Divine are not ripe enough to be brought forward in opposition to the popular cults, and he contents himself with now and again dropping a hint which is evidently meant for those who have ears to hear. Thus he says of the Persian religion: "I know that the Persians observe the following cus-

<sup>1</sup> The reader will recollect the hesitation shown by both Æschylus and Sophocles in using the name Zeus to denote God (see *ante*, pp. 361, 384).

<sup>2</sup> There can be little doubt that the purer religion of the Persians had an influence upon Herodotus, and through him upon his age (see further below).



toms. It is not their practice to set up images or altars or temples; *but they charge those who do so with folly*, because, as it seems to me, they do not believe that the gods have human forms, as the Hellenes do" (ii. 13, 1).

Again, he describes the horror felt by a barbarous nation at the orgiastic cult of Dionysus (Bacchus)—a horror which led the people to depose, and finally to kill, one of their kings who was found to have sought initiation in the Bacchic mysteries. "The Scythians reproach the Hellenes on account of their Bacchic worship," says Herodotus (iv. 79); "they say that it is not right to invent a god who drives men to madness." Mark the irony—to invent a god—and this put into the mouth of the despised barbarian!

Speaking in his own person of the popular deities, Herodotus is very cautious; but we cannot mistake his meaning. Thus, relative to the formation of the so-called "vale" of Tempe, he writes (vii. 129): "The Thessalians say that Poseidon (Neptune) made the ravine through which the Peneius flows, and what they say is probable. For whoever believes that Poseidon shakes the earth, and that rents made by earthquakes are the work of this god, would say, on seeing this, that Poseidon made it. For the separation between the mountains (Ossa and Olympus) seems to me to be the work of an earthquake." Here the physical phenomenon is placed over against the popular belief, but not in such a way as to give offence.

So, on another occasion, regarding the destruction of the Persian fleet off the Magnesian coast, he tells (vii. 189) the story of the Athenians having called to their aid their "son-in-law," Boreas, the north wind, and invoked him by prayers and sacrifices to help them and destroy the ships of the barbarians, as he had done at Mount Athos, and adds: "Whether it was on account of this that the north wind fell upon the barbarians as they rode at anchor, I cannot undertake to say." Herodotus believed firmly that the destruction of the Persian armament was the work of the Divine power, but he will "not undertake" to link together as cause and effect sacrifices offered to a physical power and this destruction.

(2) *Herodotus' Philosophy of History*.—We have seen that the avowed object of the old master's inquiry is to do justice to the memory of the great deeds wrought by Hellenes and barbarians alike. He has, however, another and a deeper motive for undertaking the inquiry, and this is nothing less than the tracing of the hand of God, or the working of the Divine power, in the affairs of men. As a first attempt at a philosophy of history, this hidden *motif*, which pervades the whole, is of exceeding interest. We may observe in it four leading features—two strong points and two weak ones.

(1) *Herodotus' Belief in the Divine Oversight*.—First of all we note that he finds evidence of a Divine forethought in the realm of nature, and herein is the direct forerunner of Aristotle. The fact that savage and hurtful animals are unprolific, while such as are timid and fit for food bring forth abundantly, is, he says (iii. 108), a proof of the wisdom of God. It is what "is likely, seeing that the forethought of the Divine power is wise."

Turning to the affairs of men, Herodotus sees in everything a Providence, or, as he calls it, a Divine chance or a Divine fortune (*Theia tychē*). Thus, in the speech in which Cyrus incites the Persians to revolt from the Medes (i. 126), he tells them of his own persuasion that he was born by Divine Providence to lead them to freedom. Again, when the seven leading Persians have resolved to kill the false Smerdis, they are encouraged by an omen to dare the deed at once, and, says Herodotus (iii. 77), they passed through the guards stationed at the entrance to the royal palace "by Divine guidance" (*Theia pompē*).

Further, on the most trivial occurrences may hang momentous issues, because they are directed by this Divine chance. Thus, in a very beautiful little nature-touch we are told (v. 92) that when the infant Cypselus was about to be put to death by the ten conspirators, who, on account of an Oracle, were alarmed at his birth, and had repaired for the purpose of making away with him to the house of Eetion—the babe, innocently entrusted by its mother to the leader of the band, “by a Divine chance” smiled into the face of the would-be murderer. The man, touched with pity, is unable to carry out the plan of dashing it on the ground. He hands it to the second, the second to the third, and so on—until finally the whole ten withdraw, and the infant’s life is saved by the “Divine chance” of the smile.

That this *Theia tyche* is not blind fate is evident from the words which Herodotus (ix. 16) puts into the mouth of a Persian, who says to a Greek just before the battle of Platæa: “No man can avert that which must come to pass—from God (*ek tou Theou*).”

So far the old master is in entire agreement with that thought which sees a Providence directing all things—fashioning and shaping all our ends, “rough-hew them as we may.”

(2) *Herodotus’ Belief in the doctrine of Retribution.*—Then, secondly, we note in Herodotus, as in Homer, that the Divine Power is an avenging Power. The doctrine of a Divine retribution, or nemesis, looms large in his pages. This subject, however, we must reserve for our next section, inasmuch as it belongs not only to the individual philosophy of Herodotus, but to the universal conscience and consciousness of Hellas. That “God is a God of judgment” was a truth well understood in antiquity.

(3) *Fate in Herodotus.*—These, then, are the strong points in the philosophy of Herodotus—his belief in the Divine Providence and in the Divine avenging. We approach, on the other hand, one that disappoints us much, when we turn to the support which he lends to the popular theory of fate. That evil doctrine which, we imagined, had been exorcised by Sophocles reappears again in Herodotus. God is undoubtedly the Moral Governor of the Universe—and yet, strange contradiction, man seems once more to be the plaything of fate. “Man is all chance,” says the Solon of Herodotus to Cræsus (i. 32); and phrases such as “He was fated to be miserable,” “destined to be unhappy,” will readily occur to the memory of every reader (i. 8; iii. 161; iv. 79). Nevertheless, the true doctrine of fate as taught by Sophocles (and as we saw it in the great Trilogy)—viz., that a man determines his own fate by his own actions, that “as a man soweth, so shall he also reap”—is writ large in Herodotus for those who have eyes to see—both in his fully worked out doctrine of the Nemesis, and also in the materials which he supplies in abundance, as we know, for the express purpose of enabling his readers to form a judgment for themselves. The weakness of Herodotus’ presentation is that these materials are not fully worked out, and hence his reasoning sometimes appears to us both shallow and superficial. He ascribes to fate what a Sophocles (as in the case of the sons of Œdipus) would have shown to be retribution.

Let us take an instance in point—the well-known story of the “fate” of Cræsus.

There is probably no reader of Herodotus who is not exceedingly sorry for Cræsus—his griefs, in the loss of his son, and his reverses, in the loss of his empire, are so heartrending. And when we find, moreover, that all this comes upon one who is described throughout as a pious man, one who makes the most wondrous of offerings to Delphi, we find ourselves asking (as in the case of Œdipus), “Why did such a man incur such a fate?”



"Oh!" said the tradition, "Cræsus must suffer for the sin of Gyges, his ancestor in the fifth degree. The Fates would not be appeased until the punishment had been inflicted"—and this explanation (?) of the fall of Cræsus Herodotus complacently repeats (i. 91).

Now let us turn to the materials which the old master industriously places before us, and ask ourselves what a Sophocles would have made of these, had he undertaken to dramatise the story of Cræsus.

(a) We should in all probability have seen the monarch commencing his career by that deed of horrible barbarity which Herodotus chronicles (i. 92), and which was perpetrated by Cræsus upon his own half-brother, Pantaleon, whom a part of the Lydians desired to place upon the throne. Not content with taking precautionary measures against his rival, Cræsus puts him to death by tearing his flesh with a fuller's thistle, and then salves his conscience by dedicating the murdered man's property to Apollo. By this act alone Sophocles would have shown that Cræsus had brought himself within the sweep of the great unwritten laws—the law of blood-guilt and the law of kindred. Blood, and that a brother's blood, cried against him from the ground to that mighty God who is in the laws and who groweth not old.

(b) Then we should have seen Cræsus convicted by the law of justice for having planned the schemes whereby the Asiatic Greeks were reduced to slavery. Before his time the Greeks in Asia were free, Herodotus tells us (i. 5), and Cræsus was "the first to begin unjust practices (*erga adika*) towards them," taking possession of their cities "on the most frivolous pretexts" (i. 26).

(c) Next Cræsus would be condemned by the law concerning rulers and ruled. He declares war against Cyrus in order to avenge the deposition of Astyages, king of the Medes, and his own brother-in-law. By taking the part of Astyages, however, Cræsus is attempting to bolster up the cause of one who, like himself, has been guilty of an act of atrocious cruelty towards a subject. Herodotus tells the whole revolting story (i. 121–130), and concludes with "Astyages, after he had reigned thirty-five years, was deposed from the sovereignty, and by reason of his cruelty the Medes submitted to the Persians" (i. 130), and yet this is the man whom Cræsus would have replaced upon the throne had his expedition been successful.

(d) Finally, we should have been shown Cræsus in the act of disbanding his army—and that in the face of the enemy!—a want of common prudence which would doubtless have been described as an *apatē*, a judicial blindness sent upon Cræsus as a punishment for the blood-guilt which he has incurred, his injustice towards the Hellenes, and the badness of the cause which he had espoused (i. 77).

Of all these materials for explaining the "fate" of Cræsus on the highest grounds Herodotus makes absolutely no use, although the whole story "fits in" so admirably with his own theory of retribution that we are surprised to see the Sophoclean method not applied to it. We cannot suspect Herodotus of not seeing the true solution, for he expressly declares Cræsus to have been "the first to begin acts of injustice towards the Hellenes." We can only repeat that in his philosophy the doctrine of fate is not worked out—the declaration of the Oracle, the "explanation" on the surface, is emphasised; the real explanation left in the background. Consequently Cræsus, the fratricide, has come down in his pages for all time as a man much more sinned against than sinning—one who suffers for the sins of an ancestor in the fifth degree, rather than for his own.

(4) *The Jealousy of the Divine Power.*—This superficiality is still more

apparent when we turn to what is the very kernel of the philosophy of Herodotus, the pivot on which all else turns—his theory of the “jealousy (*phthonos*) of the Divine Power.”

That the troubles of mortals are due to the envy experienced by the gods at the sight of human prosperity is a conception by no means confined to Herodotus. We have seen it even in a Pindar.<sup>1</sup> The idea seems to have arisen from the contemplation of the “ups and downs,” the many “changes and chances” (to use our own phrase) of this life, changes and chances which seem to befall the good in common with the bad. On Herodotus this mutability of fortune made a deep impression. He concludes his *procemium*, or introduction to his inquiry, with the words (i. 5): “I shall further proceed to describe the estates of men, both small and great. For those that were great of old have become small, and those that were great in my time were formerly small. Knowing, therefore, that the prosperity of men is not lasting, I shall commemorate both alike.”

This undoubted fact, that the prosperity of men is not lasting, the popular feeling ascribed to the “jealousy” of the gods; and Herodotus is apparently content to follow the popular feeling,<sup>2</sup> for he puts it into the mouth of the wisest of his characters, Solon, the Athenian, and Artabanus, the Persian. Thus, when Cræsus presses Solon to pronounce him, as king of Lydia, the happiest of men, Solon replies: “O Cræsus, I know that the Divine Power is all jealousy and delights in confusion,<sup>3</sup> and thou askest me concerning human affairs! In the lapse of time men are constrained to see and to suffer many things which, willingly, they would neither see nor suffer. . . . Man is all chance”; and the moral is—look to the end before pronouncing any man happy—call no man happy before his death. “For to many God hath vouchsafed a glimpse of bliss, and then uprooted them utterly.” And in the same strain Artabanus is made to say (vii. 46): “God, having allowed men to taste the sweetness of life, is jealous of His own gift.”

The grand exemplar of the instability of fortune is Cræsus. Concerning him Herodotus says expressly (i. 34) that, after the departure of Solon, “a great nemesis fell upon the Lydian king from God (*nemesis ek Theou*), probably because he considered himself the happiest of men.” This nemesis is the death of his eldest son and heir—a nemesis which a Sophocles would undoubtedly have traced to the cruel murder of Cræsus’ half-brother.

Of the grand deep teaching of Æschylus again—that there is no such thing as “jealousy” with God, that the suffering which He sends is intended to lead men to wisdom—*pathos mathos* = learning by suffering—there is no trace.<sup>4</sup> Herodotus appears to know Æschylus,<sup>5</sup> but he ignores him, although his own history affords at least one notable instance of the *pathos mathos*, this very case of Cræsus, for the monarch becomes a wiser, if a sadder, man after his great reverses.

Nor has Herodotus, with all his clearness of observation, noticed in his countrymen that which Xenophon remarks (*Cyrop.*, viii. 4, 14; *cf.* Schmidt, *Ethik*, i. 82) concerning them, that “few of them bear prosperity well,” otherwise he might have taken his opportunity, as did Pindar, to warn them against that *hybris*, that insolent pride, which infallibly draws down upon its harbourer the Divine wrath.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 342.

<sup>2</sup> But see the remarkable story of Pheretimê, whose excessive vengeance is said to have roused the “jealousy” of the gods, p. 510.

<sup>3</sup> *Tarachôdes*, delights in troubling men.

<sup>4</sup> See *ante*, p. 365.

<sup>5</sup> He alludes to him at least as one of the “earlier poets” (ii. 156).



Polycrates of Samos is the standing exemplar of the popular notions concerning the "jealousy" of the deity. He is ruler of the island of Samos, and among the most "magnificent" of the tyrants who had ruled over the Asiatic Greeks. He is a man whose good fortune becomes proverbial—as with the golden touch of Midas, everything to which he turns his hand and his scheming brain prospers. He conceives the unique idea of plundering all, friends and foes alike, and makes the pleasing discovery that he gratifies his friends more by restoring what he had taken from them than if he had left them undisturbed. In fact, his prosperity reaches such an alarming pitch that his friend and ally, Amasis, king of Egypt, sends him the following characteristic epistle (iii. 39, 40).

"Amasis to Polycrates thus sayeth: It is a pleasure to hear of a friend and ally prospering, but thy exceeding prosperity doth not cause me joy, forasmuch as I know that the gods are envious. My wish for myself, and for those whom I love, is, to be now successful, and now to meet with a check; thus passing through life amid alternate good and evil, rather than with perpetual good fortune. For never yet did I hear tell of any one succeeding in all his undertakings, who did not meet with calamity at last and come to utter ruin. Now, therefore, give ear to my words, and meet thy good luck in this way: Bethink thee which of all thy treasures thou valuest most and canst least bear to part with; take it whatsoever it be and throw it away, so that it may be sure never to come any more into the sight of man. Thence if thy good fortune be not thenceforward chequered with ill, save thyself from harm by again doing as I have counselled." (Rawlinson's trans.)

Polycrates thinks the counsel of Amasis good, considers with himself how he may best afflict his soul, and finally throws into the sea a costly seal, the most prized of all his possessions. Now, he thinks, he is safe; by this voluntary sacrifice he must have conciliated any god who happened to be watching him with jealous eye. Alas! the seal returns to him—a fisherman calls, a few days after, at the palace with a lordly offering, a splendid fish, of which he begs the tyrant's acceptance as worthy of himself and his might. The servants proceed to prepare the fish, when lo! within it is found the fatal seal—the gods will not accept the sacrifice. Polycrates writes an account of the event to the Egyptian king; Amasis reads the letter and perceives that it is "not possible for man to deliver man from impending calamity, and that Polycrates, who was always fortunate, and who even found what he had thrown away, could come to no good end." Amasis, therefore, sends a herald to Samos, and formally renounces guest-friendship with Polycrates, lest, when the great and fearful calamity overtook the latter, his own soul should have to be given for one who was his guest-friend.

The expected "bad end" does come to Polycrates, for he is enticed to Sardis by Orctes, the Persian governor, who wishes to seize Samos, and put to death in a shocking manner (iii. 120-125).

Thus, owing probably to the expression in the letter of Amasis, Polycrates has travelled down through the ages as an example of that "jealousy" of the gods which cannot tolerate the prosperity of man—a theory which Æschylus had shown to be utterly false. And yet, by a little more thought, Herodotus could have so presented the story as to give in Polycrates an example either of deserved retribution, or of that aspect of the "jealousy" of the Supreme Being which is not inconsistent with His character. But Herodotus loses the opportunity—he shows indeed (iii. 39), and that with unctious, nemesis falling upon Orctes, the Persian governor, for his treachery to Polycrates, but he does not see that the "fate" of Polycrates is due to the very

same nemesis, for the tyrant had established himself on the throne by the murder of one brother and the banishment of another. Like Cræsus—like the *Cedipus* of Sophocles—Polycrates had also brought himself within the sweep of the great law of the requital of blood-guilt. Zeus Herkeios, Zeus of the family, was the “jealous” god who watched him, and who would not accept the propitiatory offering of the fratricide.<sup>1</sup>

Then, again, his “fate” overtakes Polycrates at the moment that he thinks himself about to realise his grandest schemes, for he is lured to Sardis by the promise of treasures sufficient to help him in his “great hopes” of becoming potentate of Ionia and the isles (iii. 122). In this plan he sins against the Hellenic notions of rulers and ruled; he is cut off in the very act of trying to exalt himself above his brethren, by which act he has attracted to himself the “jealousy” of that Being whom the Hellenes themselves knew as Zeus the giver of freedom, Zeus Eleutherius.

Thus the two great instances of the “jealousy” of the Divine Power as shown in the vicissitudes of life—the stories of Cræsus and of Polycrates—are singularly alike. Both potentates secure the throne by bloodshed, both are fratricides, both endeavour to disarm the Divine wrath by voluntary gifts, both are the first “in the historical age” to attempt the overthrow of the liberties of the Hellenes on a large scale; the plans of both are nipped in the bud just when they seem to be blossoming into fruition.

This brings us to the second aspect of the Divine “jealousy,” as found in the philosophy of the old master, and in justice to Herodotus let us say emphatically that it is that aspect which predominates—the idea that God holds the balance of the universe, a truth which was stamped, as it were, upon the conscience of mankind by the stupendous events of the Persian wars.

This part of the subject is brought out in the speech of the discreet and able Artabanus, uncle to Xerxes, who endeavours to dissuade that monarch from carrying his arms into Europe.

Xerxes, we must premise, has convened an assembly of the chief Persians in order to lay his intention before them, and in his speech to them has just explained his object in undertaking the expedition. This is not only that he may punish the Athenians for having come to the help of the Ionians and burnt the city of Sardis, not only that he may avenge the ignominious defeat of the Persians at Marathon, but that he may make “the Persian territory co-extensive with the æther of Zeus”—or, as we should say, with the air of heaven—and to this end “not only the guilty but the not-guilty must alike be brought under the yoke of slavery” (vii. 8). Thus the openly expressed aim of the expedition is self-aggrandisement, to be achieved at the cost of all that others hold dear. Xerxes will make himself, in fact, an earthly Zeus.<sup>2</sup>

Mardonius, the Persian who afterwards gives “satisfaction” to the Spartans for the death of Leonidas, applauds the resolution of the king; but Artabanus warns him most solemnly by every means of persuasion in his power against it. His chief argument is as follows (vii. 10): “Thou seest that God strikes with His thunders the tallest animals, nor suffers them to be ostentatious, whilst the smaller ones do not offend Him; thou seest that He even hurls His thunderbolts against the greatest buildings and the highest trees. For God is wont to cut off all that overtops the rest (is too

<sup>1</sup> Compare the voluntary offering of Polycrates with the dedication of his murdered brother's property by Cræsus.

<sup>2</sup> We recollect *Æschylus*'s description of Atossa, the consort of Darius and mother of Xerxes, as “wife, yea, and mother of the Persians' god” (see *ante*, p. 366).



highly exalted). Thus, a large army may be defeated by a small one, when God's jealousy awakes, and He strikes it with terror or with lightning, so that it perishes in a way unworthy of itself. For God will not allow any one to cherish lofty thoughts—except Himself."

This reasoning Herodotus applies *in propria persona* where he remarks concerning the destruction of the Persian fleet off Eubœa (viii. 13): "All this was done by God, that the Persians might be made equal to the Greeks—or at least not much superior." And we may remark, again, that on one occasion Herodotus shows a true appreciation of the Cause of the cause. God upholds the "balance" of the universe, not only as Ruler of the rulers of this world, and therefore resolved like an Eastern potentate to suffer no rival, no one thinking "lofty thoughts" beside Himself, but in order to preserve the moral order of the universe. That Herodotus clearly saw this is evident from the words which he puts into the mouth of Themistocles after the momentous battle of Salamis (viii. 109). "It is not we," says Themistocles to the assembled captains, "who have wrought out this deliverance, but the gods and heroes, who were jealous that one man should reign over both Europe and Asia, and he unholy and wicked."<sup>1</sup>

## II.—SIN AND RETRIBUTION

The evidence afforded by the old epic poets, by the tragedians, and by Pindar, of a strong moral consciousness deeply inwrought in the Hellenic peoples, is most strikingly confirmed in Herodotus. What Homer knew as the *opsis* of the gods appears in Herodotus as *nemesis*, or *tisis*=retribution. His theory of the Trojan War—to Herodotus, as to all the Hellenes, Thucydides included, a real historical event—is the following (ii. 120): "I am of opinion," he says, "that the total destruction of the Trojans was ordained by Providence, in order to make it clear to all men that, for great crimes<sup>2</sup> great punishments are in store at the hands of the gods." Crime, and punishment from an unseen but avenging Power, are, in fact, throughout the whole history linked together, either explicitly or implicitly, as inseparable companions.

In the stories of Crœsus and Polycrates (i. 8-13), the theory of a personal retribution is obscured by Herodotus' favourite doctrines of fate and the jealousy of the gods. Nevertheless, retribution appears here also, for the fate which Crœsus suffers is the penalty (*tisis*) for the sin of his ancestor Gyges, who had murdered his master. And we may note that it is the fear of retribution which induces Cyrus to liberate the hero of the story. When Crœsus is already standing on the funeral pyre, Cyrus recollects that the rival whom he has condemned to be burned alive was, but a few hours previously, a monarch as great and powerful as himself, and considering that he also is a man,<sup>3</sup> and fearing the vengeance (*tisis*) of the gods, he commands that the fire shall be extinguished.

In the story of Polycrates, again, the governor, Orœtes, who lured the tyrant of Samos to his destruction, is himself put to death by order of Darius—a "fate" which Herodotus twice describes (iii. 126-128) as vengeance (*tisis*) overtaking him on account of Polycrates.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Anosios kai atasthalos*.

<sup>2</sup> *Adikēmata*=acts of injustice.

<sup>3</sup> The same reflection induces the Theseus of Sophocles, as we recollect, to protect Œdipus (see p. 408).

<sup>4</sup> It is noteworthy that in the original the phrase is: "The Avengers overtook Orœtes"—the avenging powers being, as it were, personified. Herodotus has broken with the Erinyes and the other machinery of the old mythology, but he clearly believes that the avenging powers are Divine agents.

In the story of Pheretimē, again, Herodotus seems to have a glimpse of the great truth implied in the claim so familiar to the Christian: "Vengeance is Mine—I will repay, saith the Lord." Pheretimē is queen of Cyrene and mother of Arkesilaos, who has been put to death by the men of Barca because they had suffered many and grievous things at his hands (iv. 167). Pheretimē gains over the Persian governor of Egypt to assist her with an army, gets possession of Barca by a dishonourable stratagem, and then proceeds to wreak her vengeance not only on the men of the city, but their hapless wives, impaling the men and mutilating the women in a savage manner. Pheretimē herself retires to Egypt, and there, immediately after her revenge on the people of Barca, dies a horrible death, which may be compared with that of the Herod of the New Testament. The comment of our historian is (iv. 205): "So hateful to the gods are the excesses of human vengeance." The phrase rendered "hateful" is *epiphthonioi*—literally, the gods become jealous of the excesses of human vengeance. In working out this awful revenge Pheretimē had overstepped the limits assigned to mortals, and arrogated to herself, like Herod, something that belongs to God.

Other instances of punishment following swiftly on the heels of crime abound. As an example of real spiritual insight, we may remind the reader of the story of Glaucus and his attempt to induce the Oracle to sanction his breach of the trust reposed in him.<sup>1</sup>

The history of the Spartans affords two remarkable examples of retribution as viewed from the standpoint of the people.

(1) *The Story of Demaratus and Cleomenes*.—Cleomenes and Demaratus are the reigning kings of the period.<sup>2</sup> Demaratus has made an enemy of his colleague by thwarting his policy in the expeditions which they jointly led; and he has incurred the hatred also of Leutychides, a man of his own royal house, whom he has disappointed of his affianced bride by taking the lady to wife himself. Cleomenes and Leutychides, being thus both aggrieved, plot the downfall of Demaratus, and accomplish it jointly by maintaining that Demaratus is not the son of his reputed father, and consequently not the rightful king of Sparta. In this allegation they are supported by the Oracle, the Pythia (or prophetess) having been persuaded by a man of great influence at Delphi, one Cobon, who is in the interests of Cleomenes, to give a false response and "say what Cleomenes wished to be said" (vi. 66).

Justice is thus poisoned at its earthly fountain-head—by the decision of Delphi Demaratus is deposed and takes refuge at the Persian court, and Leutychides is appointed king in his stead. But retribution comes upon all the conspirators. The deceit practised by the Pythia is detected; she herself is deposed from office, and Cobon, who had induced her to comply with the wish of Cleomenes, is forced to fly from his native city. Leutychides, who had profited most by the plot, is convicted of accepting bribes from the Thesalians; he is banished from Sparta, and his house razed to the ground. Thus, as Herodotus puts it (vi. 72): "Leutychides did not grow old in Sparta, but, as it were, paid the penalty (*tisis*) to Demaratus."

As for Cleomenes, the instigator of the nefarious scheme, his end is most miserable of all, for he becomes mad, and in his mania hacks himself to death—thus, as it were, inflicting the penalty upon himself. Madness, as we have seen,<sup>3</sup> was regarded as a disease of Divine origin, *i.e.* sent by God as a punish-

<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, p. 322.

<sup>2</sup> The Spartans, as the reader will recollect, had two joint-kings, whose functions were mainly those of commanders-in-chief.

<sup>3</sup> In the case of Ajax, p. 389.



ment for some sin, and the Hellenes busied themselves in trying to discover the cause of the visitation on Cleomenes. These reasons, set forth in full by Herodotus with his usual impartiality, are most instructive as affording an index to the national ideas on the subject of sin and its consequences.

(a) Most of the Hellenes, says Herodotus (vii. 75), ascribe the madness of Cleomenes to his having persuaded the Pythia at Delphi to say what she did concerning Demaratus.

(b) The Athenians, however, assigned the judgment on Cleomenes to his having ravaged the sacred precincts (the *temenos*) of the two goddesses at Eleusis during an invasion of their territory.

(c) The Argives attributed the calamity to his having treacherously massacred fugitives who had taken refuge in the sacred grove of the national hero, Argos, and then contemptuously<sup>1</sup> set fire to the grove itself.

(d) The Spartans declared that Cleomenes became mad from no Divine impulse, but from a habit which he had learned from barbarians, the Scythians, of drinking unmixed wine.

Thus the general consensus of opinion throughout Hellas is that Demaratus did suffer on account of some sin—injustice, or impiety, or treachery combined with cruelty, or drunkenness. Herodotus himself says (vi. 84), like a judge summing up the results of an inquiry, "Cleomenes appears to me to have paid this penalty to Demaratus," *i.e.* he suffered for his own treachery and injustice.

(2) *The Heralds of Darius.*—Finally, we may adduce as an evidence of national feeling the beautiful story of the two Spartans (vii. 133–137) who voluntarily surrendered themselves to the Persians, a living sacrifice, in satisfaction for the sin of their nation in slaying the heralds whom Darius had sent to Sparta to demand earth and water. Indignant at the claim, the Spartans had thrown the unfortunate messengers into a well, and bidden them fetch earth and water thence for the king. Somehow things did not go well at Sparta after this act of barbarity; the omens were not propitious, and it became evident that the Spartans had incurred the wrath of one of the national heroes, Talthybius, the herald of Agamemnon, who had a sanctuary in the city. Consequently, after due deliberation, inquiry was made by public proclamation whether any Lacedæmonians were willing to die for Sparta. Two men of noble birth and great wealth—men, that is, who had everything this world could offer to make life worth keeping—voluntarily presented themselves to give satisfaction, by their own death, for the wrong done to the heralds of Darius, and actually proceeded to Persia for the purpose. Of these courageous men we shall hear more presently. Meantime, suffice it to say that, when they arrived at Susa, they found the great king not wanting in magnanimity. In reply to their simple statement that "the Lacedæmonians had sent them to give satisfaction (to pay the penalty) for the death of the heralds who had perished in Sparta," Xerxes expressed himself as unwilling to follow the example of the Lacedæmonians, who "had violated a custom held sacred by all men. He would not himself do what he blamed in them, neither by killing them in return would he release the Lacedæmonians from the condemnation which they had incurred." The two brave men, therefore, returned to Sparta, and the wrath of the hero Talthybius was apparently appeased. Nevertheless, it broke out again. Herodotus notes it as a remarkable fact that the sons of those men both died a violent death, thus, as it were, paying the penalty which was not accepted at the hands of their fathers.

<sup>1</sup> The phrase means, literally, with utter want of reason, without regard to the sacred character of the place.

We must not allow the supernatural intervention of Talthybius, the national hero, to blind us to the fact that we have in the story a genuine instance of the awakening of the national conscience. During the height of their excitement and resentment the Spartans had allowed themselves an act reprobated by all civilised nations. When the excitement is past they realise what they have done and seek to make atonement. In other words, they recognise that upon sin must follow nemesis, retribution.

### THE GREAT UNWRITTEN LAWS

Nowhere in Greek literature is the action of the unwritten laws among the Hellenic peoples more evident than in Herodotus. It runs like a deep, strong undercurrent throughout the whole inquiry, betraying its existence by its tendency and influence—moulding and shaping their history, as it were, before our eyes. A very brief survey of the field will enable us to judge of this.

(1) **Reverence for the Unseen Power.**—This subject will meet us again when we come to consider the Hellenic ideals. Meantime, we would only point out here that Zeus is still God to the Hellenes. They worship gods many and lords many; the hero-cult absorbs a large share of their love and reverence. Nevertheless, there is One who represents to the ordinary Hellenic mind what to *Theion* = the Divine Power represents to Herodotus, and that One is still Zeus.

It is to Zeus Herkeios—Zeus, whose altar stands in the court of every house—god of the household and family, that Demaratus appeals at the crisis of his life, when his birthright has been sworn away by Delphi, and he urges his mother to speak the truth (vi. 68). It is in the name of Zeus Eleutherius, giver of freedom, that Mæandrius seeks to restore their rights and liberties to the Lamians after the death of Polycrates. His intention is frustrated, but his design in renouncing the tyranny and erecting an altar to be the token of that design is that he “may prove himself the most just of men.” Of this intention Zeus Eleutherius is the witness (iii. 142).

It is reverence (the *aidos*) for Zeus Hellenius (Zeus, the god of the Hellenes) that restrains the Athenians from betraying Hellas (ix. 7).

Finally, in their hour of direst need, we note that it is Zeus who comes to the help of the Hellenes in general and of the Athenians in particular. It is Zeus—not Apollo, the mouthpiece of prophecy, nor Athena, the patroness of the city—who decrees that their “wooden walls” shall be a shelter and a refuge for the Athenians when the Persians in their myriads swarm into Attica, devastating and burning all before them. Now, as before, the Argian Heaven-Father is He to whom the hearts of the people turn in their distress (vii. 141).

(2) **Reverence to Parents.**—The honour held to be due to parents is well exemplified in the story of the Argive priestess and her sons, as told by Solon to Croesus. Possibly the action of the law is all the more impressive in that the story itself is related with quite another purpose in view (i. 31).

When the Argives were engaged in celebrating a festival of Hera (the patron deity of the land), it was necessary, says Herodotus, that the priestess of the goddess should drive to the temple in state. On one occasion it happened, unfortunately, that the oxen for her chariot were not at hand; the people awaited the sacrifice; time pressed, and in the dilemma the two sons of the priestess—who were both athletes and had both been crowned in the games



—put themselves under the yoke, and drew their mother's car a distance of 45 stades, to the temple, where they arrived amid the plaudits of the assembled multitude—the men praising the manly strength of the youths, the women blessing their filial piety. The proud and happy mother thereupon besought the goddess to grant to the sons “who had so highly honoured her the greatest blessing that man could receive.” Her prayer was answered, but in an unexpected way; for the youths, after they had sacrificed and partaken of the feast, fell asleep in the temple itself, and never awoke again.

The direct object of the story, as put by Herodotus into the mouth of the wise man, is to prove the historian's own theory regarding the mutability of fortune—to prove, as Solon declares, “that in these young men God clearly showed how much better it is for man to die than to live,” since death was undoubtedly the answer to the mother's prayer. But we have here evidently a standing national tradition handed down from one generation to another, for the story concludes with the remark that “the statues of the young men had been made by the Argives and dedicated (as a national monument) at Delphi, in commemoration of their having attained to the highest virtue.”<sup>1</sup> Hence, Pindar only expresses the national feeling in the admonition (also traditional) which he gives—“to reverence most of all Zeus, and never to deprive of like honour a parent's spell of life” (*cf.* p. 353).

(3) **To the Position of Women** among the Hellenes there is not wanting a clue in the pages of Herodotus. From him alone, apart from other sources, we can gather:—

(a) Firstly, that domestic life among the Hellenes was infinitely purer than among the barbarians. This is evident from his significant observation concerning the Lydians. “The Lydians,” says Herodotus (i. 94), “observe nearly the same customs as the Hellenes, except that they prostitute their daughters.”

(b) Secondly, that there was no polygamy among the Hellenes—a fact attested by our historian in the same incidental way. Of the Egyptians he remarks (ii. 92) that “each man has but one wife, like the Hellenes.” And again in relating the story of Anaxandrides, king of Sparta, he tells us (v. 139 *et seq.*) that when pressure was brought to bear upon him by the ephors to put away his wife, by whom he had no children, and marry another, in order that the royal race might not become extinct, Anaxandrides absolutely refuses to deal thus with a wife who was blameless and whom he loved. The ephors and the senate then proposed to him to marry a second wife whilst retaining the first. To this, as threats were held out, the king consented; and “afterwards,” says Herodotus, “he had two wives and occupied two houses—doing what was not at all in accordance with Spartan customs.” The phrase rendered “two houses” is literally “a double *hestia*,” or hearth—a significant word, for let us note that the *hearth* was the shrine of the household deities, the sacred place of the family and of the suppliant. It is plain that, in Herodotus' opinion, although Anaxandrides is represented as doing all that he could to spare his first consort's feelings, yet that he has outraged a sacred principle, for the historian proceeds to chronicle what he evidently considers to be a sort of nemesis on this violation of the sacred hearth. The second wife, he tells us, bore one son, and one only, Cleomenes, who “was not in his right senses, but almost mad”;<sup>2</sup> whilst, by a strange fortune, the first and childless wife became later the mother not only of Dorieus, held to be the first among the young men

<sup>1</sup> Lit., the statues were made “as of those who had become the first of men”—in filial piety.

<sup>2</sup> As we know, he died in raving mania (see *ante*, p. 510).

of his day, but of Leonidas, the lion hero of Thermopylæ, and a twin brother. Thus was the sanctity of the true family *hestia*, the hearth of the first wife, vindicated.

(c) *The Home Life*.—So much for the mother of Leonidas. Concerning his wife also, Herodotus has two anecdotes which let a little light—all the brighter because unexpected—into the Spartan home life.

In the first (v. 51) we see Cleomenes—the son of Anaxandrides, now one of the reigning kings of Sparta—standing by the same *hestia* with his little daughter, Gorgo, his only child, by his side. A stranger appears—it is Aristagoras, tyrant of Miletus, who has crossed to Europe to solicit the aid of Sparta in his revolt against the Persians, has already had public audience of the king, and been refused the expected assistance. He now has recourse to other means—enters the house of Cleomenes bearing the olive-branch of the suppliant, and begs the king to send away his little daughter, for he would speak with him alone. Cleomenes bids him proceed, and take no account of the child, whereupon Aristagoras renews his petition for help, this time enforcing it by a bribe. Beginning with the offer of ten talents, and finding the king proof against temptation, he gradually increases the bait until it has reached the dazzling amount of fifty talents. Possibly Cleomenes shows signs of yielding, for the little maid, who has hitherto been a silent auditor of the colloquy, suddenly cries out: “Father, the stranger will corrupt thee if thou go not away!” And, says Herodotus, the father was so pleased with the counsel of the child that he did “go away” into another room, and left Aristagoras to make the best of his way home, his mission unfulfilled.

In the second anecdote (vii. 239) this same quick-witted little maiden—then of some eight or nine summers—is grown up and the wife of Leonidas, and it is she who, by her clear-headedness, secures for the Hellenes early intelligence of the intended descent of the Persians upon their country. It happens thus. No sooner has Xerxes definitely resolved to undertake the expedition than Demaratus, the unjustly deposed and self-exiled Spartan king, then living at Susa,<sup>1</sup> determines to send home news of the coming disaster—either out of goodwill to his countrymen, or from malice, says Herodotus. Whatever the motive that dictated the message may have been, how to get it transmitted is the difficulty, for the great king has his officials and his spies all along the royal road that runs from Susa to the coast. At length Demaratus bethinks him of the following device: he scrapes off the wax from an ordinary writing-tablet, inscribes the message on the wood beneath, then pours fresh wax on the top, and so entrusts it to the messenger, to all appearance a new tablet which has not yet been used. When the Lacedæmonians receive it, they are all at a loss; no one can guess what it means, until the solution of the riddle occurs to Gorgo, daughter of Cleomenes, and wife of Leonidas. Her counsel is that, if the wax be scraped off, the message will be found beneath. The counsel is followed, the message read, and afterwards sent to the other peoples of Hellas.

It is pathetic that the first effect of this counsel, which no doubt Gorgo gave to her husband in private, was an intimation that she herself must lose her husband. For the Spartans sent to Delphi to inquire concerning the secret message and the impending war, and the Oracle made answer that “either Lacedæmon must be overthrown or their king perish.” There were two kings of Sparta, yet Leonidas seems to have taken the warning as intended for him, for Herodotus tells us (vii. 220) that he remained at Thermopylæ with the express determination of fulfilling the Oracle—resolved to “perish” himself

<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, p. 510.



that Sparta might not be "overthrown." Had any further "counsels" of Gorgo ought to do with this noble resolve? From what we know of the Spartan women, and of Gorgo herself, we may be tolerably sure that the wife's single-heartedness fanned the flame of the hero's devotion. We may, further, be justified in thinking that the marriage of Leonidas and Gorgo had been one of affection, for the youths and maidens of Sparta had opportunities of seeing one another before marriage—opportunities denied, so far as we know, in the other Grecian States.<sup>1</sup>

(4) **The Faithful Oath and Covenant** appears often in the pages of Herodotus, not only as binding between State and State, but between man and man. No better instance of Hellenic feeling as regards the sacredness of obligations can be given than the story of Glaucus the Spartan.

Everywhere we find evidence that the Hellenes recognised uprightness and integrity as a great moral force, as a law binding them to pursue a certain definite course and no other. If their great men accept bribes, they know perfectly well that they are doing wrong, and the very children have the same innate consciousness. It is not the result of direct teaching from without, but the spontaneous dictate from within, that resounds in the warning of the little Gorgo: "Father, go away, or the stranger will corrupt thee!" "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings" comes evidence of the Divine law written on the tablet of every human heart. The Spartans are often held up as the "awful warning" against bribery and corruption. It is true that they who, of all Hellenes, could make the least use of money had the most intense money-hunger. Nevertheless, Herodotus relates (iii. 148; v. 51) that even the "mad" Cleomenes showed himself "the most upright of men," for on two different occasions he turned away from the temptation, and took steps to have the briber ejected from Sparta.

(5) **Treatment of Strangers and Suppliants.**—That such a custom as the protection of the suppliant—of the fugitive, even when that fugitive happened to be an enemy—should have held its ground in an age when the fiercest passions were too often excited is in itself a proof of the silent reign of law. We have seen (p. 511) how in Sparta the national conscience was

<sup>1</sup> Regarding a certain Callias of Athens, it is chronicled (either by Herodotus or one of his commentators)—the passage (vi. 122) is regarded as an interpolation—as a very remarkable instance of generosity that, when his three daughters had arrived at marriageable age, he not only gave to each of them a most magnificent gift, but actually allowed each to gratify her wish by marrying the man of her choice! That this liberty of "choice" should be deemed worthy of special mention speaks volumes. Even at this early period Greek marriages seem to have been pure and simple *marriages de convenance*. And yet there must have been exceptions. How, otherwise, can we account for the love-story of Hæmon and Antigone?—unless, indeed, Sophocles is there describing "men and women as they ought to be," rather than men and women as they were in his own day. One, at least, of his characters, however, Sophocles certainly drew from life—his Kreon must have had many a prototype, and in nothing is the egoist more true to nature than in his tirades against women. Kreon yield to an Antigone—to a woman? Never! It is amusing to see the same spirit on the arena of history. Against none of the princes, governors, captains, or leaders of the hosts of Xerxes did the Greeks cherish animosity, save only against Artemisia, queen of Halicarnassus. On her head the Athenians set a reward—to the man who should take her alive was promised the glittering prize of ten thousand drachmas. And why? Not because she was fighting on the wrong side; not because she had proved herself the wisest of the counsellors of Xerxes; not because she alone had given the great king advice that would seriously have damaged the Hellenes if it had been followed; no! but because, as Herodotus naïvely informs us (viii. 93), "they thought it fearful (*deimon*) that a woman should fight against Athens!" Fortunately for herself, Artemisia showed her ability in this also, that she contrived to make good her escape. We can have no great esteem for the Halicarnassian queen as the leader of a Greek State, voluntarily espousing the cause of the enemy of Hellas. Nevertheless, so evident is the animus against her that it is a relief to find Artemisia clever enough to disappoint it.

roused in the case of the murdered Persian heralds, who, apart from the "sacred" nature of their office, were so far suppliants, and therefore entitled to protection, in that they were defenceless and strangers, and consequently under the special care of Zeus Xenios, Zeus Hiketesios, the god of the stranger and suppliant.

The custom was, in fact, regarded as so plain an obligation that no guidance or direction from without concerning it was necessary. To consult the Oracle about so self-evident a matter as the protection of the suppliant was really "to tempt the god," precisely as in the case of Glaucus (p. 322), who asks Apollo whether it is lawful for him to steal. The one duty is as clear as the other. This is set forth in the story of the Cymæans, who inquired of the Oracle of Apollo at Branchidæ as to whether they should deliver up Pactyas, the governor of Sardis, who had fled to Cymæ for refuge after his revolt against Cyrus. The Oracle (ironically) bids the inquirers deliver him up to the Persians, whereupon the Cymæans prepare to carry out the command. But, says Herodotus (i. 157 *et seq.*), although most of them had come to this determination, Aristodicus, a man greatly esteemed among them, distrusted the response, suspecting that the ambassadors had not spoken truly. He therefore went himself, with others, a second time to Branchidæ, and put the question in the name of all, and in the following form: "O king, there has come to us a suppliant, Pactyas the Lydian, in order to escape a violent death at the hands of the Persians. They now demand him, and bid the Cymæans deliver him up. We indeed fear the might of the Persians, but we have not dared to give up our suppliant before it has been made clear to us by thee what we should do." Thus they asked, and the second time came the same answer, bidding them give up Pactyas to the Persians. Thereupon, says Herodotus, Aristodicus did what he had resolved beforehand to do in the event of such an answer being given (so incredible did it appear to him that this could be the mind of the Divine power). He walked round the temple and began to remove the sparrows and other birds which had there built their nests. And as he was doing this there came (so it is said) from the sanctuary to Aristodicus a voice, exclaiming: "Most impious of men! what is this that thou darest to do? Wilt thou tear my suppliants from my temple?" But Aristodicus, without losing his presence of mind, replied: "O king, dost thou thyself come to the help of thy suppliants, and yet biddest the Cymæans deliver up theirs?" And the answer came again: "Yea, I bid you do so, to the end that, having acted impiously, ye may the sooner perish and come no more to consult the Oracle about the delivering up of suppliants," *i.e.* that ye may no more hypocritically ask counsel concerning what is perfectly clear, and thus try to shirk a plain duty.<sup>1</sup>

Herodotus adds that the Cymæans, finding themselves in a terrible dilemma—not daring to deliver up Pactyas lest they should themselves perish, nor yet daring to keep him with them lest they should be besieged by the Persians—sent him away to Mytilene. Hearing, however, that the Mytilenæans were preparing to surrender him for a price, they sent again, took him out of their hands, and entrusted him to the Chians. The latter were not proof against the temptation of a strip of land on the continent, Atarneus in Mysia, offered them as a bribe by the Persians. They tore the unfortunate Pactyas from the temple of Athena, where he had taken refuge, and delivered him up; but the Chians knew well that they were doing

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the remark of Œdipus concerning his sons' duty to himself (p. 408). "No Oracle," he says, "is needed for that—their own hearts might tell them, if they would listen."



wrong. Not one of them, says Herodotus, dared to offer to any of the gods the fruits of the acquired territory of Atarneus. All that that land brought forth was carefully "excluded from the temples," because it was the price of blood.

Treat this beautiful story as we may—as fable, allegory, or tradition—it is nevertheless another evidence of the existence in the age of Herodotus of the thing called "conscience." Herodotus tells us (vi. 91), moreover, that the Æginetans had contracted an *agos*, a pollution or defilement, which "could not be expiated by any means," in that they had forcibly removed a suppliant from the door of the temple of Demeter. This occurrence will engage our attention later.

Meantime we have said enough to show that this "felt" duty of protecting the suppliant is, for those who have eyes to see, another beautiful evidence that the Great Father left not Himself at any time without witness in the hearts and minds of men.

(6) **Blood-guilt.**—That the Hellenes knew the force of a law which imperatively demanded life for life is abundantly proved by the case already familiar to us—that of the two Spartans who voluntarily offered themselves in the place of the murdered heralds (p. 511). Almost every instance of the *tisis*, or retribution, noted by Herodotus shows that the national feeling was alive on the subject.

(7) **Reverence for the Dead.**—The Hellenic feeling regarding the respect due to the dead is nowhere more clearly shown than in the account given by Herodotus of the treatment after death of the body of Leonidas, the Spartan, by the Persians, and of that of Mardonius, the Persian, by the Spartans.

After the battle of Thermopylæ, Xerxes goes to view the slain, and desecrating the body of Leonidas, orders the head to be cut off and impaled. The comment of Herodotus (vii. 232) is that the king must have been more incensed against Leonidas whilst yet alive than against any man, otherwise he would never have "committed such an outrage upon the dead." The word rendered "committed such an outrage" is, literally, he would never have so transgressed the law (*parenomèse*)—that unwritten law which demands respect for the shrine of the spirit. The king's command, he adds, was carried out.

A short time passes; the position of affairs is changed in Hellas; the sea-fight of Salamis has been won, and Xerxes is on the eve of his disgraceful flight, when a herald suddenly appears in the camp of the Persians in Thessaly, insists upon being admitted to the royal presence, and addresses to the king the following bold words: "O king of the Medes, the Lacedæmonians and Heraclidæ of Sparta demand satisfaction for blood, because thou hast slain their king while defending Hellas."

This "satisfaction" the Spartans demand at the bidding of the Oracle, which has also told them to accept as an omen the king's reply. Xerxes laughs at so preposterous a demand, contemptuously allows the herald to wait for a length of time, and then finally points to Mardonius—who had encouraged him in his designs against Hellas, and whom he is leaving behind as commander-in-chief—with the words (viii. 114): "This Mardonius will give you such satisfaction as is fitting." The herald accepts the "omen" and quits the camp.

Time passes; the situation is still further changed in Greece; the great victory of Plataea has been won; the Persians are utterly routed, and Mardonius himself has fallen. Not content with this visible "satisfaction," a man from the camp of the Æginetans (one Lampon, a man of repute) goes to the leader of the combined Hellenic forces, Pausanias the Spartan, having

what Herodotus calls "a most unholy (*anosiōtaton*) proposal" to make. This "unholy" proposal, together with the reception accorded to it, we must relate in the words of our historian (ix. 78, 79). "O son of Cleombrotus," says Lampon to Pausanias, "thou hast accomplished a marvellous,<sup>1</sup> a great and noble work, and to thee God has granted to deliver Hellas and to win for thyself a glory such as hath been achieved by no Hellene that we know. Do thou now what yet remains to be done, that thy fame may be still greater, and that in time to come the barbarian may take good heed to commit no reckless deeds upon the Hellenes. For when Leonidas fell at Thermopylæ, Mardonius, as well as Xerxes, cut off his head and stuck it on a pole. Now do thou pay him back in like manner, and thou shalt have praise from all the Spartans first, and afterwards from the other Hellenes. For, when thou hast impaled Mardonius, thou wilt revenge the death of thine uncle Leonidas."

This he said thinking to please Pausanias, but the king replied: "O Æginetan friend, thy goodwill and thy foresight I appreciate, but thou hast erred in thy judgment.<sup>2</sup> First thou settest me, my race, and my work on high, and then thou sinkest me down to nothing by advising me to mutilate the dead; and if I do this thou promisest me yet greater honour! Such a deed befitteth better barbarians than Hellenes, and even in them we detest it. At such a price I will not seek to gratify the Æginetans, nor yet any whom it would please. It is enough for me to win the approval of the Spartans by acting and speaking in the fear of God.<sup>3</sup> As for Leonidas, whom thou biddest me avenge, I say that he hath been amply avenged, both he and the others who fell at Thermopylæ, by the countless lives of these slain. And now," adds Pausanias, with a meaning which might well make the putter-forth of the unholy proposal tremble, "do thou never again approach me with such reasoning or such counsel, and be thankful that thou goest forth untouched." And when he had heard this the Æginetan went his way, doubtless with a slightly quickened pulse.

Thus we see that neither the natural impulse to requite "like for like"—and in so doing at once to avenge the cause of Hellas and the insult offered to the noblest of her sons, his own near relative—nor yet the recollection that the Oracle had sanctioned the demand for "satisfaction"—the "omen" pointed specially to Mardonius—sufficed to induce Pausanias to "transgress the law" by the "unholy" treatment of the dead.

### III.—THE GREAT UNWRITTEN LAWS (*continued*)

(8) **Rulers and Ruled.**—As was to be expected, no inner law shows more outward change since Homeric days than this. The days of the recognition of kingly rule as rule by right Divine are gone, and the age described by Herodotus shows us State after State in the birth-throes of political freedom. The monarchy, "one-man rule," had been succeeded by the oligarchy, "rule of the few"—the great nobles probably, and former counsellors of the king; disputes among the oligarchs had given the opportunity to one-man rule again—this time the rule of the strong man, the tyrant. Now everywhere the effort is being made to displace the tyrant in order to make way for a constitutional régime under Demos, "the people." Democracy, "power of the people"—or, as

<sup>1</sup> *Hyperphues*—literally, a work beyond the course of nature, beyond the power of man.

<sup>2</sup> Literally, sinned, missed the mark, in this thine opinion (*gnōmē*).

<sup>3</sup> Literally, doing holy deeds (*hosia*) and speaking holy words (*hosia*). *Hosia* always implies that which is done in accordance with Divine, as contrasted with human, law.



Herodotus calls it, isocracy, "equality of power"—is everywhere aimed at, if not established. Sometimes the conflict is between the people and the oligarchs, sometimes between both these classes and the tyrant, against whom they have combined; but everywhere equality of rights is gradually growing into the watchword in places where the people have begun to think at all.

The reason of all this seething and agitation is not far to seek, for in endeavouring to establish the right of self-government the Hellene felt that he was working out a law of his nature. To say that the Hellenic idea of "equality" was in the age under consideration the same conception that it was in the age of Pericles—that is, at the time when Herodotus penned the results of his inquiry—would be absurd. We may even admit that the historian read not a few latter-day notions into his inquiry.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, after making all allowances on this score, enough remains to prove that the doctrine of equality of rights was in the age of the Persian wars already a definite something, a factor to be taken into account.

We have said that self-government was an inner necessity or law to the Hellene, and nowhere is this more clearly shown than in the earnest protest made by the Corinthians against the proposal of the Spartans to restore by force Hippias and the tyranny to Athens. "Surely," says Sosicles (v. 92), spokesman of the Corinthians (in the assembly of the Peloponnesian allies whom the Lacedæmonians had summoned in order to lay before them their scheme concerning Athens)—"Surely the heavens will now sink beneath the earth, and the earth rise to mid-air above the heavens; men will have their dwelling in the sea, and fishes dwell where men are now, when you, O Lacedæmonians, are preparing to abolish equality and bring back tyranny to the cities—tyranny, than which there is nothing among men more unjust or more blood-stained."

In other words, to the speaker's mind the attempt to impose a despotism and abolish the equal rights of citizens is as much a turning upside down of the law universal as would be the cataclysm or the absurdity which he pictures. "Men may as easily breathe in the sea," he says, "as freemen breathe the air of slavery."

Sosicles proceeds to ask, first, why the Lacedæmonians do not themselves try this tyranny which they are seeking to force upon others, and then illustrates his argument by relating the experience of the Corinthians under the tyrants Cypselus and Periander, concluding with a solemn appeal to the religious sense of the Spartans. "We call upon you," he says, "and adjure you by the gods of Hellas not to establish tyrannies in the cities. But," he adds, "if ye will not desist, but attempt, in defiance of right, to restore Hippias, be it known to you that we Corinthians do *not* approve your doings."

And, says Herodotus, when the other allies heard the Corinthian speak thus freely and generously,<sup>2</sup> they too plucked up courage to oppose the dominant power. "They, every one, raised their voice in support of the opinion of the Corinthian, and called upon the Lacedæmonians to introduce no strange ways into an Hellenic State."

Thus the scheme of Hippias and his Spartan allies to reintroduce that *neōteron*, that "strange and novel thing," a tyranny, was shattered by the sturdy adherence of the Corinthians to the unwritten law.

That they regarded this law as something Divine is clear from the appeal to the gods of Hellas. Hippias indeed in his rejoinder (v. 93) declares that he, too, appeals to the same gods; but, as we have seen, the allies simply pass over

<sup>1</sup> See under "Herodotus: his Ideals."

<sup>2</sup> *Eleutherōs* = as befitting a freeman.

this statement as, like the scheme itself, too monstrous to be worthy of consideration. That Zeus, highest god, had already received the name of Eleutherius, "giver of freedom," is testimony enough that the people sincerely believed the Divine power to be on the side of freedom.<sup>1</sup>

Another instance of the innate consciousness in the Hellenic mind of the justice, *i.e.* the rightfulness, of equality amongst citizens is to be found in the story of Cadmus the Coan, and his resignation of the sovereignty of Cos, to which he had succeeded on the death of his father. Herodotus tells us (vii. 164) that Cadmus had received the tyranny "firmly established, but gave it up willingly, and through fear of no one, for righteousness' sake." For this reason simply he lays down the government of the beautiful and fertile little island "in the midst of the Coans," to use the pregnant phrase of Herodotus, and himself withdraws to Sicily. Here he attracts the attention of Gelon of Syracuse, and is chosen by that most astute of rulers, who knew that Cadmus "had come in this manner, *i.e.* for righteousness' sake, to Sicily, and who had, moreover, other proofs of his uprightness"—to convey his treasures to Delphi during the Persian invasion. Cadmus has instructions to watch the contest, and, if Xerxes should prove victorious, to present him with the treasures, and also with earth and water on behalf of the territory over which Gelon rules; but, in the event of the defeat of the king, he is to bring back the treasure to Sicily. And Herodotus mentions as "not the least proof of the righteousness of Cadmus" that although he is thus entrusted with vast treasure, and has it in his power to appropriate it, he yet, after the great sea-fight which forces Xerxes to retire, actually does bring back the treasure untouched to Sicily.

That Cadmus should have undertaken this temporising mission does not on the surface say much for his love of the fatherland. Nevertheless, we must bear in mind that Sicily, his adopted country, was threatened at the time by another invasion, that of the Carthaginians, with a force of 300,000 men under Hamilcar. It was impossible for Gelon to cope with both foes, and the threatened attack of Carthage is indeed allowed by Herodotus (vii. 165), in his

<sup>1</sup> It is true that freedom in Hellas, as elsewhere in antiquity, was essentially a restricted, one-sided thing. These very Corinthians, who could thus speak and argue, themselves maintained their freedom, their commerce, their arts, and manufactures at the cost of others whom they held in bondage. The same holds good in regard to Athens, to Argos, to Thebes, to all Hellenic States, and especially in regard to Sparta. The dominion of the Spartans was built up on slavery; their helots consequently, as well as the conquered Messenians, felt towards the Spartans precisely as did the Spartans towards the Persians. Freedom, therefore, in Hellas means simply the continued freedom of the free, *i.e.* of the citizens, not the extension of the powers of freedom to those who had never enjoyed them, and who are not reckoned amongst the citizens. Slavery as an institution looms large in Hellas. Nevertheless, in this Hellas sinned not more than her neighbours. The existence of slaves—of a large body of hewers of wood and drawers of water—was considered in antiquity everywhere and at all times absolutely essential. The why and wherefore of this belief will meet us later on in its own place. Here we would only point out that slavery as an institution is not discussed by Herodotus. His whole narrative centres in the desperate struggle for freedom made by his countrymen; yet he nowhere even stops to apologise for the existence of such an institution as slavery in their midst, so natural does it appear to him. In this he falls far short of Homer, who undoubtedly felt sympathy with the slave. (See *ante*, "Zeus takes away the half of a man before he makes him a slave.") Nevertheless, we must take things as we find them, and not fall foul of Herodotus because he is a true son of his age, and does not seem to be aware of any incongruity between the struggle for freedom on the one hand and the possession of slaves on the other. "Freedom" and "equality" then in antiquity, and not in Herodotus alone, mean the continued freedom and equality of the freemen, the only "citizens" (in the true sense) of the State.



fair-minded way, to be possibly the real reason why Gelon did not come openly to the help of Hellas in her hour of need.<sup>1</sup>

Cadmus may thus have felt that to assist even a tyrant at so terrible a crisis, when the barbarians of both Asia and Africa were pouring down from different quarters upon Hellas, was admissible in a true patriot. By his co-operation, at any rate, Gelon's hands are set free; he knows that he has an ambassador who will be absolutely faithful to his trust, and make peace for him, if need be, with the great king. He himself, therefore, is able to concentrate all his energies on meeting Hamilcar and the Carthaginians, with the result that they are vanquished in the great battle of Himera, and that on the very day which witnessed the defeat of the Persians at Salamis (in 480).

Hence, we can admit that Cadmus may, after all, have been impelled by patriotic motives in acting as ambassador for the tyrant Gelon; and at all events his probity and honesty of purpose in both great actions of his life are beyond dispute. He seems to have restored the government to the citizens of Cos in the same spirit as that in which he restored the treasure to Gelon, *i.e.* he gave both back from the conviction that he was restoring both to their rightful owners, out of a sheer sense of justice and right-dealing. "He came to Sicily," says Herodotus, "for righteousness' sake (*apo dikaiosynēs*)"—a noble record for any man, for *dikaïosynē*, let us note, is more than mere justice. It implies the idea of being "just with" some one else, and is the word constantly used in the New Testament to express righteousness—the state of being just with God. It is on those who "hunger and thirst after *dikaïosynē*" that our Lord pronounces the blessing (St. Matt. v. 6), and St. Peter declares (Acts x. 34) that "God is no respecter of persons, and that in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh *dikaïosynē* is accepted of Him." May we not, therefore, think that Cadmus, the ex-tyrant of Cos, like Cornelius, the centurion of Rome, was a sharer in the blessing, when he "laid down the government in the midst of the citizens," and made himself an exile "for righteousness' sake"?

If we ask now why the Hellenes should have had this intense inner conviction that the desire for equality of political rights was in itself a something that made for righteousness, and therefore pleasing to the Invisible Justice, the answer is not far to seek.

(1) In the first place, the Hellenes from earliest days seem to have been dimly conscious of that which Sophocles later formulated in the pregnant words, "God hath given to every man the *phrenas*," the thinking-power, and with it the power to form a moral judgment.

(2) This being admitted—the fact that the thinking-power is not confined to the few or the one—it followed as a matter of justice that every man should have the right of helping, by his own judgment and his vote, to shape the policy to which as a citizen he was required to submit, or expected to carry out.

We cannot for a moment suppose that the Greek reasoned out the matter at this early stage as a question of politico-philosophical ethics—the child does not attain to manhood without passing through an intermediate stage, in which he is led by instinct rather than guided by reason and deliberate thought.

<sup>1</sup> The reason assigned by the Spartans and Athenians for Gelon's neutral attitude during the Persian invasion is that he considered it disgraceful for the tyrant of Syracuse to be under the command of the Lacedæmonians, and would give assistance on no other condition than that he himself should be commander-in-chief, a course to which neither Lacedæmonians nor Athenians would consent. Herodotus impartially gives the Sicilian version, which is probably the true one, *viz.* that Gelon literally was unable to give help to the Hellenes of the continent (vii. 157 *et seq.*).

What we may accept, however, as probably the true version of the political development of Hellas is (1) that that instinctive consciousness of capacity for freedom of which we have already spoken, acting as an inner necessity or law, urged the people on from step to step; and (2) that this consciousness of capacity was quickened by what they suffered at the hands of their rulers, whether rule was represented by the few or the one.

That this capacity for freedom was innate in the Hellenic mind from the first appears certain, for in no other way can we account for the marvellous succession of political "experiments" made on Hellas.<sup>1</sup> Where the people happen to come under the power of a "beneficent" tyranny, as was the case in Athens, under Peisistratus, they remain quiescent for a time, only to wake up later, after the long dormancy of the "political capacity," with tenfold energy. But, where the people have to suffer, there begins that seething and agitation, and demand for a share in the government, which is implied in the phrase *iso-cratia* = equality of power, which can be paralleled in the history of no other race. And it must be admitted that the people proved themselves not only as capable of rule as either the few or the one, but also less blood-thirsty and cruel than either.

Three instances of the treatment meted out by their rulers to the people may suffice:—

(1) *The royal rule* has already been exemplified by the conduct of Pheretimē to the people of Barca (p. 510).

(2) *The oligarchical rule* by that of the wealthy citizens of Ægina to the commonalty (p. 517).

(3) *How the tyrants* treated the people is best seen from the account given by Herodotus of the doings of Gelon of Syracuse. When the Sicilian Megara was besieged by him and the inhabitants finally obliged to sue for peace, the "fat" men (*pacheis* = men of substance), who had raised the war against Gelon and consequently expected to be put to death, he simply removed to Syracuse, where he made them citizens. The *demos* or common folk, on the other hand, who were not to blame for the war, and consequently anticipated no harm, he also removed to Syracuse, but for transportation (as slaves) out of Sicily. The Eubœans of Sicily he treated in the same way, making the same distinction, and this he did to both, adds Herodotus (vii. 156), "because he considered Demos a most disagreeable neighbour."

Royalty slays and mutilates the people, both men and women; oligarchy (or plutocracy) cuts them down ruthlessly, nor even spares the suppliant; under the tyranny they are sold like brute beasts. What wonder that the slumbering "capacity for freedom" is roused by such pricks and goads, and begins to assert itself? What wonder, either, that it should have considered Divine justice to have been on the side of their demand for equality of rights?

To the honour of the people be it said that when they have the power to retaliate they are merciful, and content themselves with banishing their oppressors.<sup>2</sup> Long-suffering has taught them mildness and forbearance.

**The Effects of Equality of Rights.**—As to the effects of equality on a people, Herodotus himself has no doubt whatever. Referring to the achievements of the Athenians after the overthrow of the Peisistratidæ and the increase

<sup>1</sup> Aristotle gave an account of more than a hundred political constitutions, each of which in the form in which it had survived to his day represents the outcome of many political attempts.

<sup>2</sup> Sometimes the people would better have consulted the true interests of Hellas had they not been so merciful; for, as we have seen, it is the exiled "fat" men of Naxos who, on being banished by the people, hasten to Miletus, and, by soliciting the help of the Persians, bring about the subjugation of the islands (p. 500).



of liberty given them by the reform of Cleisthenes, he says (v. 78): "And now, indeed, the Athenians grew in power. Hence it is clear—and not from one instance only, but in every way—what an excellent thing equality is.<sup>1</sup> For under the tyranny the Athenians were no whit superior in war to their neighbours, whereas after they shook off the tyrants they became by far the first. And this proves that when they were oppressed they had no goodwill to fight, as for a master; whereas, now that they are free, each man works eagerly, as for himself."

**The Inner Law of Liberty is not Licence.**—That the sound, God-given instinct which demanded liberty demanded also law and government is, even in these early days, clearly enough demonstrated. Let the following examples suffice.

In the expedition against Greece, Demaratus, the ex-king of Sparta, accompanies Xerxes in the hope that the result of the campaign will be to restore him to the throne. Xerxes several times avails himself of the exile's knowledge of his countrymen in order to become acquainted with their mind and habits. On one occasion he asks Demaratus whether he really believes that the Spartans will venture to oppose him and his tremendous host. Demaratus cautiously inquires on his part whether the king wishes to hear the truth or not, and on being reassured makes the following justly celebrated answer (vii. 101 *et seq.*): "Since thou biddest me speak the truth in all things, know, O king, that poverty indeed is always at home with us in Hellas, but that manliness (*aretē*) has been acquired as the fruit of wisdom and stern law. By it Hellas has warded off both poverty and despotism." As to the question raised by the king, Demaratus can only say that it is not possible for the Spartans to accept proposals which would bring slavery to Hellas; even if the other Hellenes ranged themselves on the side of the king, they, the Spartans, would oppose him. It avails not either to ask their number, he adds, for if there were but one thousand of them that thousand would still withstand him.

Xerxes laughs at the notion of a thousand men facing his myriads. If the Spartans numbered five thousand, he says, the Persians would still outnumber them by a thousand to one. Moreover, he asks, How would free men venture such a thing? If, like the Persian hosts, they were subject to one individual, then through fear of him and urged on by the lash they might perhaps measure themselves against a greater number; but as the case stands, being free men (left to their own free will), the Spartans would do nothing of the kind. Such is the despot's notion of valour—the spur is to come from without in the shape of the lash, or at least the fear of the disapproval of the one all-powerful individual.

Demaratus quickly undeceives him. According to Greek notions, both the spur and the bridle must come from within. "The Spartans," he says, "are the bravest of all men, for, although they are free, yet they are not entirely free. Above them is a master, even the law, and it they fear, sire, far more than your subjects fear you. They do whatsoever it commands, and it always enjoins the same thing, forbidding them to fly before any number of men, but to remain in their ranks and conquer—or die!"

Xerxes had later an opportunity of verifying the truth of the words of Demaratus. In the pass of Thermopylæ he saw them literally fulfilled. And what was true of Spartan reverence for law in time of war was true also in time of peace.

The attitude of the Athenians towards law is perhaps best illustrated by

<sup>1</sup> The word rendered "equality" is *isēgoriā*=freedom of speech, hence equality before the law. The sentence might be translated thus: What a stirrer-up of zeal is freedom of speech!

their attitude towards their brethren of the dodekapolis, or union of the twelve cities of Ionia, in Asia Minor. Herodotus tells us (i. 143) that the Athenians "shunned" (fled from) the name "Ionian," and did not wish to be called by it, and that even in his own day they appeared to be ashamed of the name. Why so? The historian explains the feeling on the ground that "weak as the Hellenic race then was" (*i.e.* in the age of which he is speaking, the age of Cræsus and of Cyrus), "the Ionians were weakest and least of all." They had no cities of any renown except Miletus and the mother-city Athens, both of which refused to be classed with the twelve cities as "Ionian." Yet the Ionians had, in the beginning, conquered the territory which they inhabited by the sword; they had advanced steadily in civilisation, and developed all the peaceful arts of life long before Athens herself. Moreover, on the termination of their Lydian servitude by the defeat of Cræsus, after their overtures for peace had been rejected by Cyrus (who would treat with no Ionian State except Miletus), they made a brave stand for freedom. Rather than submit to the slavery by which they felt themselves "aggrieved," says Herodotus, the Phocæans and the Teians quitted their respective cities in a body, and sailed as exiles in quest of new homes.<sup>1</sup> The Ionians of the other cities gave battle to Harpagus, the lieutenant of Cyrus, and, as Herodotus himself testifies (ii. 169), showed themselves "brave men." It was not their fault that the Persian proved too strong for them, or that they thus became a second time enslaved. Why, then, should the Athenians, even in the age of the historian, have been ashamed of them as kinsmen?

The true answer would seem to be that the Ionians of the twelve cities had deteriorated—they had no moral backbone. However brave they might show themselves upon occasion, they had no sustaining power. If they felt "aggrieved" at slavery, they felt still more aggrieved at the "stern law" and discipline which, the Spartans knew, could alone ward off slavery.<sup>2</sup> This is emphatically shown in the account given by Herodotus (vi. 7) of the third enslavement of Ionia. After the Ionians had been induced by Aristagoras to throw off the yoke and strike once more for independence, the plan of procedure agreed upon was that the enemy should not be met on land, where he had every advantage, but on the sea, where the Hellenes and the Persians had to depend upon Phœnician and Cyprian help. The united Ionian and Æolian fleets, therefore, assembled off Lade, a little island near Miletus. Their vessels numbered, however, only 353, whereas the Persians could boast of 600, a fact which made it clear that everything depended, humanly speaking, on the superior courage and seamanship of the Hellenes. The united forces of the latter, however, seem to have been without leadership, until the general of the Phocæans, Dionysius, an able and energetic man, becomes keenly alive to the critical position of affairs, and, in a council held on the island, addresses the assembled captains in an animated speech, pointing out the danger of the situation.

"Men of Ionia!" he says (vi. 11), "our fate stands 'on the edge of a razor'—whether we shall henceforth live as free men, or as slaves, and that, too, as runaway slaves. If ye are willing to endure hardness now, the toil for the moment will indeed be great, but ye will be able to overcome the enemy and maintain your freedom. But if ye go on in softness and disorder, I have not the slightest hope for you; ye will have to pay the penalty of this rebellion

<sup>1</sup> That this giving up of home and fatherland was a terrible wrench is clear from the fact that more than one-half of the Phocæans were seized with a yearning and home sickness which compelled them to return to the old city and abandon the enterprise (i. 165).

<sup>2</sup> See *ante*, p. 523.



to the king. Follow me therefore, entrust yourselves to my guidance, and I promise that, if the gods are impartial,<sup>1</sup> the enemy will not venture to meet us, or, if he does, he will be beaten."

The Ionians see the forcibleness of the argument, and entrust themselves to the leadership of Dionysius, who at once begins to train them for the inevitable conflict before them. The ships are ordered to sail out every day in a long line, one behind the other; the rowers are exercised in manœuvring, cutting through the line; and the marines have to stand at arms; and, when this is over, the ships are kept at anchor, and the men at work all day long. "For seven days," says Herodotus, "they obeyed and did what was ordered; but on the eighth day the Ionians, unaccustomed to such toil, and worn out by their exertions and the heat of the sun, spake to one another as follows: 'Against which of the gods have we sinned, that we fill up such a measure of affliction? We must have been beside ourselves—nay, out of our senses—when we entrusted ourselves to a braggart Phocæan, who has only contributed three ships to the fleet. And, now that he has got the upper hand, he treats us shockingly. Many of us are ill now, many are likely to become so. Instead of enduring evils such as these, it would be better to suffer anything, and submit to the impending slavery, be it what it may, rather than be oppressed as at present. Come! let us no longer obey him!' Thus they spake, and from that moment no one would obey. They pitched their tents upon the island, and encamped just as if they had been a land force, and stayed comfortably within in the shade. No one was willing to go on board ship again, or to go through the exercise."

The word *anapeirasthai*, used here in the military sense, "go through the exercise," signifies literally "to try again," "make fresh attempts." The Ionians would make no experiments that cost them anything in the cause of freedom. Hence ensued the result that Dionysius had foreseen—the little force was demoralised, the Persians gained the day, and the Ionians were reduced a third time to slavery.

In this one instance we have in a nutshell the reason why the Athenians, the greatest experimenters in the cause of freedom that the world has ever seen, were ashamed of the name "Ionian." The Ionians had divorced the two partners who by the inner covenant are eternally and inseparably one—the love of freedom and loyalty to law.

#### IV.—THE HELLENIC IDEALS

Hitherto the ideals of individual thinkers have engaged our attention, thinkers who naturally in some points represent the mind of their countrymen, whilst in others they were far in advance of the latter. Now we come to examine for ourselves the great motive-powers that actuated the mind of the Hellenes collectively. Beyond a doubt, these were, as shown by the inquiry of Herodotus, the *aidos* and the burning love of liberty. To put it briefly, faith and freedom are the wings of Hellas in the age of the Persian wars; on them she escaped from the barbarian who sought to bring her down to his own level; on them she soared to the intellectual heights marked out by Providence for her. And without the faith, let us note, the freedom would have been impossible.

This will, we think, be evident to any one who studies the account of

<sup>1</sup> An allusion to the "jealousy" of the gods, or to the favouritism shown by them in the *Iliad*.

Herodotus. Simple and unembellished as his narrative is, it nevertheless rises to the majesty of the epic, solely from the pathos and dignity of the subject, the struggle of a handful of freemen against the most tremendous of odds. The seventh and eighth books of Herodotus are as full of true poetry, of that something which rises above materialism, as is anything to be found in the *Iliad*, and in impressiveness Herodotus undoubtedly exceeds Homer, from the conviction left on the mind of the reader that the historian is dealing with facts, not drawing upon his fancy.

It may be that, now and again, Herodotus consciously borrows his treatment of the subject from the Great Unknown, who, unconsciously to themselves, had so large a share in moulding the thoughts of the thinkers of Hellas. It may be, *e.g.*, that the scene on the walls of Ilion, whence Helen describes to old Priam the leaders of the Achæan forces, suggested to Herodotus the scenes in which Xerxes, seated on his glittering marble throne, reviews, first from the heights of Abydos in Asia, and then at Doriscus in Thrace, the hosts arrayed against Hellas. And, again, the contest for the body of Hector may be held to be the prototype of the fight for that of Leonidas. Nevertheless, although Herodotus follows the old master (who, be it remembered, was a true historian to him), it is only because, from the nature of his subject, the Homeric method offers the best mode of presentation. It is probably perfectly true that Xerxes did review and number his forces at Doriscus, and Herodotus seizes the opportunity to marshal them with rare skill before our very eyes (vii. 59 *et seq.*). In no other way could he enable his readers to realise the tremendous nature of the impending danger. Host after host, nation after nation pass before us at Doriscus—Persians and Medes, with their tiaras, gay kirtles and scaly breastplates, their osier bucklers, short daggers and swords; Syrians and Assyrians, with brazen helmets, linen cuirasses and wooden clubs knotted with iron; Bactrians, with their turbans and bows; Scythians, with pointed caps and formidable battle-axes; swarthy Indians, clad in cotton, and carrying bows with iron-tipped arrows; Caspians, in shaggy goat-skins with scimitars; Arabians, clad in mantles; Æthiopians, in panther and lion-skins, other Æthiops wearing skins of horses' heads as masks, mane doing duty as crest, ears standing erect; Libyans, in leathern garments; Thracians, with fox-skins on their heads, gay-coloured cloaks round their bodies: all these, with other hordes, tribes and peoples innumerable, march past us at Doriscus as they enter, nation by nation, the enclosed space in which, massed close together ten thousand at a time, they are counted.

Then our historian shows us the cavalry—the Persians, with their splendid steeds; the wild nomadic Lagartians, carrying instead of arms ropes, wherewith to entangle the enemy, as in a noose; the Indians, with their chariots drawn by horses and wild asses; the Arabians, with their camels.

Lastly, we see the ships drawn up—triremes to the number of over 1200, furnished by Phœnicians, Egyptians, Cyprians and others, including, alas! Dorians and Ionians of Asia, forced not only to contribute ships towards the attack on the mother-country, but themselves to join in that attack, and 3000 penteconters, light boats, and vessels of transport, all manned by Persians and men of other nationalities, serving as marines.

To complete this bird's-eye view of the expedition, we have only to add the leader, him to feed whose insatiable vanity the mighty host has been assembled, Xerxes—noble and stately in person, beautiful in body if not in mind, surrounded by the flower of the Persian army, the ten thousand immortals, with their glittering spears.

Imagine now this host of fighting men with its supplementary host of



attendants, computed to amount in all (without reckoning the women who made bread or the camp-followers) to over five millions (vii 157); contrast it with the little force of some five thousand Hellenes assembled to resist it in the pass of Thermopylæ, or with the few ships in the land-locked bay of Salamis, and it requires no prophet to proclaim that, humanly speaking, there is no hope for Hellas (vii. 202). Simply by weight of numbers, by these countless myriads who literally drink up the rivers as they advance, the little land will be laid waste, her people trodden literally under foot.

How, then, under such circumstances could the *aidos*, could any ideal, save the people?

In order to answer this question, we must arrive at a clear understanding of what the *aidos*, what freedom, meant to the Hellenes.

**Freedom.**—On this subject we need add but little to what has been already said. Freedom in its double aspect—the power of self-government and the recognition of the submission to law as essential to the security and preservation of that power—is an inner necessity of the Hellenic nature: “As well may human beings exist in the sea as freemen breathe the atmosphere of slavery.”

This panting and yearning after freedom, although shown everywhere, is best summed up in the words of those Spartans who have already twice served as examples of the noblest side of the Hellenic character (vii. 135).

On their way to Susa to surrender themselves in satisfaction for the murder of the heralds, Sperthies and Bulis are received and hospitably entertained by Hydarnes, a Persian by birth, and governor of the maritime peoples of Asia. Hydarnes endeavours to win over men of such dauntless courage to the side of the king, and for this purpose makes use of the speaking argument—himself and his position. “Men of Lacedæmon,” he says, “why do ye flee from the friendship of the king? Look at me and my affairs, and ye will see that he knows how to honour brave men. And ye also, if ye would give yourself to the king—for he deemeth you to be brave men—would obtain at his hands, each of you, a government somewhere in Hellas.” To this they replied: “Hydarnes, thy counsel is not impartial. For thou recommendest only the condition which thou hast tried, but of the other thou hast no experience. What it is to be a slave thou knowest well; but freedom thou hast not tasted—thou hast not made the experiment as to whether it be sweet or no. If thou hadst tried it thou wouldst counsel us to fight for it not merely with spears but even with hatchets!”—to hew down every obstacle that stands in the way of obtaining it.

Memorable words these in the mouth of men who are going to surrender not only freedom but life itself on behalf of the excited mob who in the cause of freedom had forgotten law.

Freedom, then, to the Hellenes is not only an inner necessity, but a something infinitely sweet, to be striven for not only with the spear but with the hatchet—the putting forth of the energy of the whole man.

**The Aidos.**—The *aidos*, as we recollect, was one of the ideals of Homer, that great pledge of the future of his people; and it is also the characteristic to which Plato in the Laws unhesitatingly ascribes the achievements of his countrymen in the age of which we are speaking. The Homeric *aidos* includes reverence to God, and to man where due; the Hellenic *aidos* includes no less. The Hellenic *aidos* shows itself—

(1) First of all, in the clear distinction drawn between the things of God and the things of Caesar. When the two noble Spartans go up to Susa to offer satisfaction for the death of the murdered heralds, Herodotus relates that

the guards endeavoured by force to make them prostrate themselves before the king. But, notwithstanding the peril of their position, the knowledge that the barbarian potentate has the power to subject them to unheard-of tortures, the Spartans refuse to comply. They simply said that they would by no means obey, "for it was not their custom to worship man, nor had they come thither for that purpose" (vii. 136).

(2) Then, secondly, the *aidos* shows itself in the preference given to the things of God over the things of man. We may call the obedience shown to the Delphic Oracle "utter superstition" if we choose; nevertheless, it was a superstition which led to many unexpected results. We may pity the people whose faith was imposed upon by the custodians of the shrine at Delphi; nevertheless, we must recognise the fact that the faith itself was there, and that it probably touched, and worked with, the Divine Overruler of events, the Power (*to Theion*) whom all the thinkers of Greece recognised as behind the Oracle and behind the popular pantheon. The spirit of this faith is best shown in the comment of Herodotus on the action taken by the Spartans in the setting free of Athens from the tyranny of the Peisistratidæ.

The latter had driven out, amongst other rivals, the Alcæonidæ, an Athenian family, who, after failing in an attempt to deliver Athens by force, had recourse to stratagem, and by bribery—so it was said—had won over the Delphic priestess to their cause.<sup>1</sup> Thenceforward, the Pythia never failed to impress upon every Spartan who came to consult the Oracle the doctrine that Athens must be set free. The Spartans, therefore, after receiving this injunction concerning Athens time after time, resolved to send an army into Attica to expel the Peisistratidæ, although the latter stood to themselves in the close relation of guest-friendship, "for," says Herodotus (v. 63), "they considered the things of God (*ta tou Theou*) more worthy of honour than the things of men (*ta tōn andrōn*)." A tyranny in Athens would better have suited the purposes of Sparta;<sup>2</sup> nevertheless, a command which they believed to be Divine is sufficient to make the Lacedæmonians put their own interests, and even the guest-friendship, in the background. The good faith of the people is there, and whether the Delphic command originated in bad faith or not, the good faith brings forth good fruit in removing the obstacle to the free development of Athens.

Such, then, is the *aidos* of the Hellenes Godwards: "They were not accustomed to worship man." "They esteemed the things of God more worthy of honour than the things of men."

*The Aidōs in its Aspect Manwards.*—But the *aidos*, as we know, has another side. The grand old Homeric *aidos* included not only reverence for the Unseen Power, but reverence for those in authority, for the aged, the suppliant—in short, for all who had any claim to consideration or kindly feeling. Thus we remember how Diomedes is represented as sternly rebuking his comrade-in-arms for resenting even an unjust accusation from the anxious Agamemnon, because on him, as leader, devolved the whole responsibility. And this beautiful feature of Hellenic character, this generous consideration for others, is still present in Hellas. It manifests itself most strikingly in the Athenians, as the following instances will suffice to show.

At the commencement of the Persian wars, the Lacedæmonians were

<sup>1</sup> The accusation of bribery seems to be hardly credible in this case; for the action of Delphi is quite consistent—it had ever been its tendency to foster the growing liberties of the people (see *ante*, p. 324)—to say nothing of the munificence of the Alcæonidæ in the building of the temple, munificence which was at least openly displayed.

<sup>2</sup> As we know, the Spartans tried later to restore Hippias and the tyranny in Athens, when they discovered, or heard the rumour, that they had been deceived by "lying Oracles" (v. 91).



undoubtedly the strongest people of Hellas, and therefore their right to command the united forces by land was cheerfully recognised by the Athenians. In regard to power at sea, however, the case was reversed—Sparta was far inferior to Athens. In the fleet which assembled at Artemisium, for example, the Athenians had 127 ships of their own, besides 20 which they had supplied to the Chalcidians, and which were manned by the latter. The Lacedæmonians, on the other hand, appear with 10, or, including all the vessels contributed by their Peloponnesian allies, with 67 ships only. The Athenians, then, as furnishing by far the largest contingent—to say nothing of their superior seamanship—had indisputably the right to command the naval force. Nevertheless, on finding that the Peloponnesians refused to sail under any other leadership than that of Sparta, the Athenians gave way. The comment of Herodotus is memorable (viii. 3). “There had been a talk at first,” he says, “that it would be well to entrust the fleet to the Athenians. But when the allies opposed this the Athenians yielded, for the safety of Hellas was their great care, and they knew that if they quarrelled about the leadership Hellas would be destroyed. And they were right,” adds the old historian, “for intestine strife is as much worse than war carried on in unison, as war itself is worse than peace. And just because they knew this they did not dispute the point, but gave way.”

Because they knew this, that strife about the leadership would ruin Hellas, the Athenians yielded—not because they felt themselves inferior to the Spartans. When the war was over, as Herodotus points out, they speedily deposed the latter from the hegemony (or leadership); but while it lasted, rather than embarrass those chosen by the general voice to lead, they, with their numerical and “scientific” superiority, cheerfully took the lower place.

Again, at Salamis, the same thing happens. Although, as Herodotus says (viii. 142), the Athenians “furnished the best ships and the largest number”—180 against 89 contributed by the Lacedæmonians and their allies—they did not press their right to command, and Eurybiades the Spartan remained admiral-in-chief.

Finally (ix. 26), at Platæa, when the men of Tegea dispute with them the honour of commanding the left wing of the united forces—the right wing being led by the Lacedæmonians, who had the power of choice—the Athenians make answer, indeed, to the boast of the Tegeans concerning their prowess in the old mythic times, by rehearsing their own record, and specially that crowning achievement at Marathon, where they “alone of all the Hellenes fought the Persians single-handed, and conquered six and forty nations.” Their manly argument, however, they conclude as follows: “‘May we not, then, from this one single action justly claim the post? Nevertheless, at such a time it is not fitting to strive about place. Therefore, O Lacedæmonians, we are ready to obey you, and to stand wheresoever and over against whomsoever it may seem best to you to set us, for wherever we are placed we will try to do our duty. Command, then, and we will obey!’ And when they had thus replied, the whole Lacedæmonian host shouted that the Athenians had a better right to the wing than the Arcadians. Thus,” says Herodotus, “the Athenians obtained it, and got the better of the Tegeans.”

And thus, we may add, by their generous and unselfish spirit the Athenians in reality got the better of the Lacedæmonians also. For let us never forget that by their generous *aidos*, their resolve to sink themselves and their rightful claims rather than embarrass the leader, the Athenians were making that which was to a Hellene the greatest of all possible sacrifices—in that they were

relinquishing the *kudos*, the glory, to another. Eurybiades the Spartan at Salamis, Pausanias the Spartan at Plataea—these were the accredited leaders to whom the glory of victory would attach.

Nevertheless, who does not heartily endorse the verdict of Herodotus that “the Athenians were the saviours of Hellas”? Posterity has amply avenged the cause of the Athenians.

“Yes!” some one of our readers may possibly say. “It is easy to see how what you call the *aidos* manwards helped the Greeks. The courtesy and forbearance of the Athenians undoubtedly prevented the splitting up of the whole into rival sections, and brought about the union that is strength. But how the *aidos* Godwards helped them is not so clear. To speak of the ‘faith’ of believers in a false religion as a saving and effectual power is nothing short of a contradiction in terms.”

Again we must ask such an one to suspend his judgment until he has examined the data on which the statement that “faith saved the Hellenes” is based. We must remind ourselves again of the eternal distinction between religion and mythology, the two streams which, starting from different fountain-heads—the one Divine, the other human—have in the course of the ages so mingled their waters that it requires analysis to separate them—the analysis of careful thought and unbiassed judgment.

“Thus saith the Lord: If thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as My mouth.”<sup>1</sup>

#### V.—THE HELLENIC IDEALS (*continued*)

The question, then, before us is this: How did the *aidos* Godwards, reverence for God, help the Hellenes in their hour of need? Let the Hellenes themselves reply.

(1) Listen to the message sent to the allies who were asked to join the little force at Thermopylæ (vii. 203): They were told that they “had nothing to fear, for he was no god that was advancing upon Hellas, but a man—and there was no mortal, no, nor ever should be one, who did not receive evil mingled with good from his very birth, and the greatest of ills were reserved for the greatest mortals. And so it would be with him who was marching against them—being a mortal, he would fall from his high estate.”

In other words: “The potentate at whose nod Asia and Africa tremble—he who passes himself off for the Persians’ god,<sup>2</sup> who is even now over-running the land with his slavish hosts—he is no more than one of ourselves, the creature of a day. A day has made, and a day can unmake him.”<sup>3</sup> Is there no indication here that the clear distinction drawn by the Greeks between the Divine and the human helped them?

“We are not accustomed to worship man.” When the Phocæans and others heard the message, says Herodotus, they joined the little band at Thermopylæ. The coming Persian was no god.

(2) Then, secondly, it was their preferring things Divine to things human that saved Hellas. The Delphic Oracle to the Greeks was a Divine voice, and it was in obedience to the Oracle that Leonidas remained at Thermopylæ, that the Greek fleet remained at Salamis.

Had Leonidas followed the dictates of natural feeling, he would have withdrawn from a hopeless position on learning that he and his followers were betrayed and caught in a trap. There was time to withdraw, for the troops

<sup>1</sup> Jer. xv. 19.

<sup>2</sup> See under Æschylus, p. 366.

<sup>3</sup> See under Pindar, p. 353.



whom he sent away escaped safely. No one would have blamed him as commander-in-chief for abandoning an untenable station and removing the line of defence farther south—say, to the passes leading into Attica. The Greek army had retired before from Tempe; why does not Leonidas now retire from Thermopylæ? Simply because the Oracle had foretold that one of her kings must die if Sparta is to be saved, and the lion-heart, believing in the truth of the prophecy, remains at his post to fulfil it (vii. 220).

This is expressly stated by Herodotus (vii. 228). The celebrated epitaph afterwards inscribed over the Spartans, "Stranger, go tell the Lacedæmonians that we lie here in obedience to their commands," gives but half the truth in regard to Leonidas. He "lay there," indeed, obedient to the command of the State; but behind the State was the Oracle, and the command to himself was interpreted by the Divine voice (vii. 220):—

"For you, O inhabitants of wide-spreading Sparta! either your great and glorious city shall be destroyed by the sons of Perseus, or, if not, the watchers of Lacedæmon shall mourn the loss of a king of the race of Heracles. Neither the strength of bulls nor the resistance of lions shall hold him (the destroyer) back, for he hath the strength of Zeus; neither, I say, shall he be restrained until he have the one or the other to his share."

"The one or the other," wide-spreading (*eurychoros*) beautiful Sparta, the fatherland, or the life of the noblest of her sons—this is the alternative set before the lion-king. He believes that no "resistance" offered either by himself or the "lions" with him will avail, and therefore he "gives his life for his friends,"<sup>1</sup> and remains at his post.

True, Herodotus says that Leonidas was moved thereto by a personal motive as well—by the all-absorbing thirst for glory, that master-passion of the Hellenes. He considered, says the historian, that "if he remained, great renown would be his, and the happiness of Sparta would not be effaced." Nevertheless, behind both motives—the thirst for the glory of the patriot, the grandest form that ambition can take, and the love of the fatherland—lies the word of the Oracle and the faith in it, the real source of the self-sacrifice.

But, it may be objected, Leonidas did not save Hellas. Grand as was the sacrifice, it availed nothing, neither did it stay the onward march of the Persians. "To what purpose was this waste?"

We shall much misread history if we argue thus. To say nothing of the simple and far-reaching fact that, wherever the "inquiry" of Herodotus has been read, there also has this story of Leonidas been read, there remains the further undoubted fact that in its immediate consequences the "defeat" at Thermopylæ was a moral victory; the Persians were hopelessly demoralised by it, they had no mind to come to close quarters again with such an enemy. No one can read the account of the magnificent defence of the pass without seeing this. First of all there is depicted for us the insulting leisureliness of the Persians, the four days' waiting at the entrance in the expectation that the Greeks "will betake themselves to flight"; the growing anger of Xerxes against the men who are thus "arrogant" enough and "ill-advised" enough to remain; his sublime command to "bring them alive" into his presence; the attempt of the ordinary troops, Medes and Cissians, to carry out the command, and its failure; the contemptuous advance of the immortals themselves, the very pick and flower of the army ("they will easily settle the business"), and their failure; the awaking of Xerxes to see with what manner of men he has to deal; his intense alarm as eye-witness of

<sup>1</sup> "Greater love hath no man than this, that he give his life for his friends" (St. John xv. 13).

the scene—three times does he spring from his royal throne in fear for the safety of his immortals; his perplexity—he is “at his wits’ end”; the treachery of Ephialtes the Malian—his proffered guidance over the mountain; the great betrayal and the terrible scene which ensues; the attacking forces pouring in from both ends of the pass, hounded on by the lash to what they know to be certain death; the defenders still “resisting” with the strength of despair, when spear and sword are gone fighting with hands, yea, and with teeth. Who that pictures all this to himself can resist the conviction that even then, at the moment of their nominal victory, the Persians were thoroughly beaten? The so-called “defeat” at Thermopylæ was in reality the most glorious of moral victories. The “god”-king is utterly baffled, the “immortals” have been repulsed, the troops have to be driven into the pass under the lash; not by Persian might but by treachery alone was Thermopylæ taken.<sup>1</sup>

“Stranger, go tell the Lacedæmonians that we lie here obedient to their commands.”

“Either your great and glorious city shall be destroyed by the sons of Perseus, or the watchers of Lacedæmon shall mourn the loss of a king.”

“They considered the things of God more worthy of honour than the things of men.”

**The Battle of Salamis.**—When we turn now to the great engagement that determined the fate of Hellas, the sea-fight off the island of Salamis, we find the same connection between the Oracle and the course of action resolved upon by the Greeks. Here, however, it behoves, not one, but all to obey. We must premise that the Athenians, like the Spartans, had sent for counsel to Delphi in regard to the Persian invasion, and had received for answer a response which might well freeze the blood of the boldest (vii. 140).

“O wretched men!” exclaimed the Pythia to the envoys from Athens assembled in the temple, “why sit ye here? Flee to the uttermost ends of the earth! Abandon your dwellings—leave the high citadel of your wheel-shaped city. For neither doth the head remain steadfast nor the body, neither the feet beneath her nor the hands, nor is there aught left in the middle—all lieth low. For upon her there dasheth destruction, fire and swift Ares speeding the Syrian chariot. Many other strong towers shall he destroy, and not yours alone. To raging flames shall be given many temples of the immortals. Alas! even now do they stand dripping with sweat, quaking with fear. Down from their topmost roof poureth black blood, presage of woe inevitable. Hence from my house! arm your soul for misfortune!”

Such were the words of the priestess, and we can well imagine the effect produced upon the minds of the hearers. How could they return home with such an answer? In their dejection a Delphian of high repute counsels them to go once more to the shrine—this time not as inquirers only, but in the more lowly attitude of suppliants, placing themselves immediately under the protection of the Divine power. The envoys obey, and approach again with the words, “O king, grant unto us a better answer concerning our fatherland. Reverence these boughs which we bear before thee as suppliants—or we will

<sup>1</sup> That Xerxes was conscious of this may be further inferred from the hatred which he displayed towards Leonidas even in death. Herodotus is at a loss to account for the violation of the dead body of the great Spartan, “for the Persians,” he says, “most of all men with whom I am acquainted, are wont to honour men that are brave in war” (vii. 238). The true reason would seem to be that Xerxes felt himself humiliated. He was not devoid of magnanimous or generous feeling, as we know; but the consciousness that even in death Leonidas was the victor, and immeasurably superior to himself, proved too strong for him and urged him on to the dastardly revenge.



never depart from thy sanctuary, but remain here until we die." Then the prophetess spake to them a second time :—

"Pallas<sup>1</sup> seeketh in vain to propitiate Olympian Zeus, pressing him with many beseeching words and wise counsels. But another word, strong as adamant, do I declare unto you : When all else is taken that lieth within the bounds of Cecrops and the recesses of sacred Cithærōn,<sup>2</sup> one thing doth far-seeing Zeus grant to the Triton-born goddess,<sup>3</sup> a wooden wall to be a sure defence to you and to your children. But do not ye await in quietness the coming of the foe from the mainland, the multitude of his horsemen and his footmen. Withdraw ! turn your back ! Ye shall yet be able to face them. O Divine Salamis ! many sons of women shalt thou destroy, whether Demeter be scattered or gathered in."<sup>4</sup>

With this grain of hope the envoys depart—but great is the perplexity caused by the Oracle, and many are the conjectures hazarded as to its meaning. Some old men, misled by the fact that the Acropolis had formerly been defended by a wooden fence, took this to be the "wooden wall." They erected a palisade of planks on the rocks, and themselves took refuge in the temple of Athena, imagining in their simplicity that Xerxes would respect the suppliant. All these came to an untimely end. By far the greater number of the Athenians, however, preferred the interpretation which bade them see in their ships the wooden wall which should serve as a sure refuge. But again another difficulty arose, and this presented itself in the last two lines : "O Divine Salamis, many sons of women shalt thou destroy." If there was to be "destruction," why remain to await it ? Why not fly ? It was then proposed that Attica should be definitely abandoned, that the Athenians should indeed put trust in their "wooden wall," but only in order that they might betake themselves to some other land and settle there. This course was perfectly feasible to those to whom the founding of colonies was no strange or unfamiliar thing, but it still left unsolved the initial difficulty of all, inasmuch as such a removal would be only a temporary escape from the Persian. What guarantee had they that the conqueror would not pursue and follow up the advantage given him by their flight ?

Fortunately, this scheme was defeated by Themistocles, whose clear intellect perceived that a decisive stand must be made once and for all—the issue faced, not evaded. And the same clear intellect enabled him to find in the very words which terrified his countrymen the assurance of victory : "Divine Salamis," he argued—why Divine ? Surely the Oracle would never pronounce a shore "Divine" that was to witness the destruction of the sons of the land ? Nay ! the destruction foretold was certainly that of the enemy.

Clearly this must be the meaning of the words ; the Athenians accept the reading of Themistocles, and make preparations to oppose the foe on the sea. By a "strange chance," as we are apt to say, ships were in readiness, ships that had been prepared by the advice of the same Themistocles for quite another purpose<sup>5</sup>—and so, says Herodotus (vii. 144), "it was resolved to await the barbarian with the whole of the folk on shipboard, in obedience to the god, together with such of the Hellenes as wished to join them."

<sup>1</sup> Athena, the patron of Athens.

<sup>2</sup> Athens and Attica—the range of Cithærōn is the boundary separating the latter from Bœotia.

<sup>3</sup> Athena, called Tritogeneia from the tradition which connected her with Lake Triton in Libya.

<sup>4</sup> The meaning is obscure. Demeter is the patron of agriculture, and the sense may be "whether this happen at the time of seed-sowing or of harvest."

<sup>5</sup> The war with Ægina.

By this decision, then, taken in obedience to a voice believed to be Divine, the Athenians saved not only themselves, but Hellas. There is no doubt about the fact. "The Athenians were the saviours of Hellas," observed Herodotus (vii. 139), and he proceeds to say that he is constrained to speak his mind upon the point, although the statement will "excite envy in most men" (belonging to other States). "If," he argues, "the Athenians, dismayed at the approach of danger, had abandoned their country, or if, while not abandoning it, they had given themselves up to Xerxes, no other people would have attempted to oppose the king at sea." And if Xerxes had been master at sea, he would have held the key of the situation. Of what avail would the walls built across the isthmus have been, if the Persian had had the command of the sea which encompasses Peloponnesus? None whatever. The cities of Greece would of necessity have been taken, one after the other, by the combined land and sea forces of the barbarian. "Now," concludes Herodotus deliberately, "if any one should say that the Athenians were the saviours of Hellas, he would not deviate from the truth, . . . for, having chosen that Hellas should continue free, they were the people who roused such of the Hellenes as had not sided with the Medes, and who, next to the gods, repulsed the king. Neither did fearful Oracles that came from Delphi and inspired them with terror induce them to abandon Hellas, but they stood their ground and remained to face the invader on their own shores."

"They remained"—yes, because, although they were indeed terrified by one Oracle, yet they were reassured and inspired by another. "Divine Salamis" and the "wooden wall" were bulwarks which they accepted in simple faith.

"They remained on their own shores." This, too, marks a noteworthy point, for if the Athenians had sailed out and chosen to face the enemy in the open sea, their chances of success would have been greatly diminished. But here, on their own familiar shores, the very winds and currents favoured them. In the open, the Persian would have had abundant space for the manœuvring of his ships, but here, in the land-locked bay of Salamis, his very superiority of numbers was against him. Thus all conspired, the winds and the waves, to favour the Hellenes who remained "in obedience to the god" on the shores of "Divine Salamis."

We are too much accustomed to treat the decision taken at this critical moment as entirely the work of Themistocles. It is true that Themistocles induced the Athenians to build the ships which rendered such noble service; it is equally true that it was he who divined the meaning of the Oracle, and who finally so managed matters that the engagement did take place at Salamis, and that at the time most favourable to the Greeks. But let us ask, Of what avail would the advice or arguments of Themistocles have been, addressed to a people who had no faith? It was the faith of the Athenians in an assurance which they believed to be Divine, not their faith in the wisdom of Themistocles, that induced them to remain.

This consideration for the safety of the whole on the part of the Athenians was subsequently put to two very severe tests:—

(a) After the victory of Salamis and flight of Xerxes, Mardonius, who was left in charge, made a serious effort to win over the Athenians to the side of the king. He thought, says Herodotus (viii. 136 *et seq.*), that the Athenians were the chief cause of the defeat at Salamis, and he hoped by gaining them as allies easily to become master at sea. Accordingly, he sent to Athens, as ambassador or go-between, Alexander of Macedon, who was in touch with both parties, being connected with the Persians by family relations, and



acceptable to the Athenians as their own *proxenos* or public guest, and also a benefactor of their city.

Alexander was empowered to hold out a most tempting bait to the Athenians. He promised them from Xerxes himself:—

(1) A general amnesty; forgiveness for all wherein they had “sinned” against him in the past;

(2) The restoration of their territory;

(3) The gift of another country, whichever they might choose;

(4) The assurance that they should have full autonomy (be their own law, live under their own institutions);

(5) And last, but not least, the rebuilding of all the temples which the Persians had burned down.

“All these things will I give you,” said the tempter, “if you will make peace with me.” And to this message of the Persian Alexander added his own persuasions as their friend and well-wisher. “The king’s power,” he said, “was more than human, and his arm exceeding long;” they could not possibly resist it, and moreover, he added, they ought to consider it a great honour to be thus singled out from all the Hellenes to receive the offer of forgiveness and the friendship of the great king.

The Lacedæmonians, however, had heard of the mission of Alexander to Athens, and in mortal fear they too sent ambassadors to beg of the Athenians not to yield to his persuasions, promising, on their part, that since Attica had been laid waste they (the Spartans and their allies) would provide for the wives and families of the Athenians so long as the war should last.

The Athenians arranged that the Persian and the Spartan ambassadors should both have audience together, in order that the latter might hear with their ears both the offer of Alexander and their own intentions.

Accordingly, after both parties had spoken, the Athenians made answer as follows. We give the speeches in full, for undoubtedly, considering the circumstances, they deserve to be ranked amongst the noblest ever uttered by mortal man.

“To Alexander, then,” says Herodotus (viii. 143), “the Athenians replied as follows: ‘That the power of the Mede greatly exceeds our own we knew already, and there was no need to taunt us with that. But, notwithstanding, we mean to strive for freedom and defend ourselves as best we can. And do not thou attempt to persuade us to come to terms with the barbarian, for we will not be persuaded. Go now and tell Mardonius the answer of the Athenians. So long as the sun shall hold on his course, we will never make peace with Xerxes, but resist him, trusting in the gods who fight for us and the heroes whose temples and images he, having no fear of the Divine judgment,<sup>1</sup> hath burned down. And do not thou in future come before the Athenians with such proposals, or deem it a good thing to counsel us to do what is not lawful (*athemista*).<sup>2</sup> For we do not wish that thou, who art our public guest and friend, should suffer aught ungracious (*acharista*) at the hands of the Athenians.’

“Such, then, was their answer to Alexander, but to the ambassadors from Sparta they spake as follows:—

“‘That the Lacedæmonians should fear lest we should come to terms with the barbarian was very natural.<sup>3</sup> Still, such fear is unworthy of you, for ye

<sup>1</sup> The Divine *opis* (see *ante*, p. 269).

<sup>2</sup> The *themistes* were the laws which the gods were believed to have under their special care. Kings in the Homeric age were only their deputies in this respect (see *ante*, p. 247).

<sup>3</sup> Lit., very human (*karta anthrōpion*).

knew well the Athenian way of thinking—that nowhere on earth is there so much gold or a land so rich in beauty and excellence that we should be willing for such a price to side with the Mede and bring bondage upon Hellas. For many and great are the considerations that forbid such a thing, even if we were willing to do it.

“‘First and chief of all, the burnt and ruined temples and images of the gods: these of necessity we must avenge to the uttermost, and not make terms with him who has wrought such deeds.

“‘And then again the *Hellenikon*—the recollection that we are of the same blood and the same tongue with the Hellenes, that we have sanctuaries in common and like sacrifices and customs—for the Athenians to become traitor to these, this were not well.

“‘Understand therefore now, if ye did not really understand it before, that never so long as there is one Athenian left will we make peace with Xerxes. As to your consideration for us, in that ye take thought for our ruined homes, and are willing to provide for our families, we admire you for it, and your kindly offer well deserves our thanks. But we are minded to go on as best we can without becoming burdensome to you. And now, seeing that matters stand thus, do ye as speedily as possible send out an army. For it seems probable to us that the barbarian will make no delay, but will fall upon our land as soon as he learns that we will do none of the things which he requires of us. Therefore it is right that we should march out and meet him in Bœotia before he reaches Attica.’

“And when they had heard the answer of the Athenians the ambassadors departed into Sparta.”

Here, then, is the first temptation—a proffered amnesty and gifts not to be despised. How is it met? It is rejected, and that by a people whose land has been devastated, their homes wrecked, and their numbers reduced by war. And what motive actuates them? A religious motive in the first place—they will not make peace with a man who has laid in ruins the temples of the gods; a religious motive in the second place—they cannot betray those who are of the same blood and tongue, and who worship with themselves in common sanctuaries and with like sacrifices.

(b) The second temptation comes from a totally different and most unexpected quarter. It results from the conduct of the very people who had urged them not to accept the overtures of Persia. Once they have gained their end and satisfied themselves that the Athenians are in earnest in their determination to continue the struggle for freedom, the Spartans think no more about them, or the advanced and exposed post which they occupy. They coolly proceed with their own defences, the fortifying of the isthmus, and leave the Athenians to bear the brunt of the Persian onset.

The Athenians wait for the promised army from Peloponnesus in vain, and at length, hearing of the rapid advance of Mardonius—who, as they predicted, had set out with his host immediately on learning the failure of Alexander's negotiations—they once more retreat, as they had done ten months previously, to the comparative security of their wooden walls and “Divine Salamis.”

When Mardonius arrives in Athens, therefore, he finds the city deserted. Unable to believe that the Athenians really intend to try the fortune of war again, he sends another ambassador to Salamis to renew the proposals which Alexander of Macedon had been commissioned to lay before the Athenians. So far from being more inclined to listen to them now—now that they see their land a second time in the possession of the enemy—the Athenians are more resolved than ever to adhere to their decision; and a member of the council who gives



it as his opinion that the proposal should be entertained is stoned to death by the excited populace, although the ambassador from Mardonius is allowed to depart unharmed.

The Athenians, however, cannot but feel acutely the ungenerous and selfish course pursued by those who have thus basely deserted them at the eleventh hour, and accordingly ambassadors are despatched on their part to Lacedæmon bearing the following message (ix. 7):—

"The Athenians have sent us to inform you that the king of the Medes is willing, in the first place, to restore to us our country; and secondly, that he wishes to make us his allies on fair and equal terms without guile or deceit, and will give us moreover another land in addition to our own, whichever we may choose. But we, reverencing Zeus Hellenius, and fearing to betray Hellas, have not accepted his offer, but refused it, although we have been unjustly treated and abandoned by the Hellenes, and know full well that it would be more to our advantage to make peace with the Persian than war. Nevertheless we will never willingly come to terms with him. Thus sincerely have we acted towards Hellas.

"But *you*, who were then sore afraid that we should make terms with the Persian, now that ye know clearly our mind that we will never betray Hellas, and that your wall across the isthmus is approaching completion, have no regard whatever for the Athenians; and, although ye covenanted with us to advance to meet the barbarian in Bœotia, ye have betrayed us and suffered him to invade Attica. The Athenians are now therefore indignant, for ye have not acted aright. But now they call upon you to send out an army speedily, that we may receive the enemy in Attica; for, since we missed Bœotia, the most suitable place to give him battle in our territory is the Thriasian plain."

Will it be believed that the Spartans, after hearing this most just and moderate appeal, deliberately put off from day to day their answer to the ambassadors until ten days—days of anxiety amounting to agony on the part of the homeless Athenians—had elapsed? And what was the reason for the delay? Simply this, that the wall was all but finished, and they cared not a jot for the homeless Athenians. "I can assign no reason," says Herodotus, "for the great pains taken by the Spartans, when Alexander of Macedon went to Attica, to prevent the Athenians from siding with the Mede, and then their being so indifferent about it, except that the isthmus was now fortified and they thought they had no further need of the Athenians."

Well might the Athenians say, "We have been betrayed"—used as the cat's-paw to enable the Spartans to ensure the safety of their own territory. Nor would the Spartans in all probability ever have redeemed their word and sent the promised army had not one of the allies, Chileus of Tegea, opened their eyes to the exceeding short-sightedness of their folly. He reminded them that, strengthen the isthmus as they might, there still remained open to the Persian "great and wide gates into Peloponnesus." With the sea beating on three sides of Pelops' isle, what might not the Persians, with such allies as the Athenians, effect? And allies the Athenians would be forced to become if they found themselves abandoned in this way by all Hellas.

This appeal to their own safety prevailed where honour and generosity were powerless, and the Spartans straightway sent forth the promised assistance. The allies immediately followed, with the result that the Persians retreated from Attica and ensconced themselves in Bœotia, where the famous battle of Platæa finally put an end to their pretensions.

Such then was the second temptation that beset the Athenians—the temptation to throw up all from the galling conviction that they had been

betrayed, the sense that they had not only been abandoned, but used as a tool for the purposes of others—an experience perhaps the most painful that a high-spirited people can make. And how did they meet it? The *aidos* in its secondary sense—consideration for others—could not help them here, for this very *aidos*—their generous spirit of self-sacrifice—had been taken advantage of and trampled upon, treatment which human nature cannot but resent. Let the Athenians themselves say why they persevered, why they did not at this crisis go over to the Mede. “We,” they reply, “reverencing Zeus Hellenius, and fearing to betray Hellas, have not accepted the offer of the king, although we ourselves have been betrayed by the Hellenes.”

The reverence for Zeus of the Hellenes, for that power in whom centre the highest religious convictions of the Hellenes, that power behind the power who had led the Aryans in their journey from the old home, and assigned to each branch of the people its own world-work—the Heaven-Father—this it was, the *aidos* in its highest sense, that came to the rescue now and enabled the Athenians to hold on their generous course under provocation so great.

Read in the light of the treatment which they had received, of the great betrayal at the hands of Lacedæmon which had bereft them of their land a second time, how noble is the attitude of the Athenians at Platæa! “We might well have a claim to command the left wing. Nevertheless, at such a time it is not fitting to strive about place. Therefore, O Lacedæmonians, we are ready to obey you [who abandoned us] and to stand wheresoever you may think best to place us. For wherever we may be placed we will try to do our duty.”

We venture to think that the foregoing has supplied a very clear answer to the question from which we started, How did the *aidos* towards God help the Hellenes in their hour of need? For, as we have seen, it was faith in the Divine power—

(1) That removed as far as possible the fear of the Persian—he is no god;

(2) That inspired the individual: in obedience to it Leonidas remains at Thermopylæ;

(3) That inspired a whole people to remain on their own shores and face the enemy;

(4) That inspired the same people with strength to overcome the two most powerful temptations that could possibly have been presented to them.

Plato was thus perfectly right when he traced (*Laws*, iii. 698) the achievements of his countrymen in this age to their possession of the *aidos*. *Aidos*, “reverence for God and man,” he says, “was then our queen.” And thus it was that their faith saved the Athenians, and through them Hellas.

Then again this question naturally raises another, Was the belief of the Hellenes that the Divine power was on their side, or, as they phrased it, that “the gods were fighting for them,” mere sentiment? or had they any reasonable grounds for their belief?

Herodotus, at least, has no doubt upon the point. Just as Thales believed the world to be “full of gods,” i.e. of Divine powers, so does Herodotus believe it to be full of indications of Divine intervention in human affairs (ix. 100). “The interposition of heaven is manifest,” he says, “by many plain signs.” Granted that some of these signs appear trivial to us, there yet remain abundant and most significant proofs that Herodotus was right in believing God to be Master in His own world. The Governor of the universe will not abdicate His throne in favour of any earthly potentate, be he a Darius, a Xerxes, or a Napoleon. Was it by “chance,” let us ask, that the first expedition against Greece, led by Mardonius in the time of Darius, came to a sudden end, that a



storm arose just as the Persian fleet was attempting to double Mount Athos, and, by destroying 400 ships and some 20,000 men, forced the Persians to retreat? (vi. 43 *et seq.*). Was it a "chance," again, that in the expedition of Xerxes the same fate overtook 400 vessels off the coast of Magnesia? (vii. 188). Or, again, that the 200 ships appointed to sail round Eubœa in order to catch the Greek fleet in a trap, as the land forces had done at Thermopylæ, were dashed to pieces on the rocks of the Cœla? (viii. 6-13). Is it not more reasonable, as well as more reverent, to say with the old master (viii. 13): "All this was done by God in order that the Persians might be made equal to the Greeks, or at least not much superior"?

Or, yet again, can we account for the terrific havoc of the Persians at Marathon (where 6400 perished against 196 Athenians), at Thermopylæ, at Salamis, on the theory merely of the superior courage of the Greeks, or the superior skill of their leaders?

Granted that the "superior courage" was there, of little avail, indeed, would the insignificant Greek force have been, either on land or sea, confronted with the enormous hosts of Persia, had not a Divine Providence appointed the spot where in each instance the confronting was to take place, allowing a Hippias to forget the marshes at Marathon, and a Xerxes to disregard the counsels of those who advised him not to try the fortune of war in the narrow gulf of Salamis. Granted that "superior skill" was abundantly manifested in the human instruments employed as leaders on the Greek side, a Miltiades and a Themistocles, what did the leaders themselves think of the victories which they had helped to decide? They knew better than to claim them as victories won merely by their own intelligence. "It is not we," says Themistocles to the assembled captains after the battle of Salamis (viii. 109), "who have wrought out this deliverance, but the gods and heroes, who were jealous that one man should rule over both Europe and Asia, and that man unholy and wicked."

That these are the words of Themistocles renders them doubly emphatic as a testimony to the belief of the Greek leaders whom he addressed, for a man so shrewd would never have given utterance before an assembly of glory-loving Hellenes to the sentiment that the gods and not they had wrought the deliverance, had he not been very sure that he was expressing the thought which was uppermost in the minds of all. And the words of Themistocles are echoed again and again by a Pindar and an Æschylus. "Had not the Lord been on our side," well might Hellas say, "then had the proud waters gone over our soul."

"Let no boast be heard," says Pindar.

"The history of the world is not intelligible," says Wilhelm von Humboldt, "apart from a government of the world."

This brings us now to the third of the problems raised by the inquiry of Herodotus, and we ask finally (and, let us add, reverently): What was the object of the Divine Ruler in this most unmistakable of "interventions in human affairs"? To this question the subsequent history and development of Hellas give the answer.

(a) The first object was undoubtedly one which the Greeks themselves recognised, at least in its primary aspect. It was a "levelling" of that high thing, the *hybris* of presumption, the pride which exalted itself beyond measure. If God be Ruler, He must maintain the balance. This truth, as we shall presently see, was apprehended most clearly by all the great thinkers of Hellas.

(b) In its secondary aspect, it was the rolling back of a wave which threatened to drown Europe and advancing civilisation. If Xerxes had gained a permanent footing in Hellas, the intellectual fire which was destined to blaze into the light that for centuries irradiated the surrounding darkness would have been hopelessly stifled. Only as freemen could the Hellenes breathe.

There yet remains a third object to which we shall do well if we give heed. The Persian invasion was a sifting and a testing of the nation, of the Hellenes themselves. In this great experiment many of the Hellenic peoples were called, many tried, but one only was chosen. Thessaly was found useless, Thebes turned traitor, Argos remained utterly indifferent, Sparta showed herself supremely selfish; Athens, and Athens alone among the great States,<sup>1</sup> proved true of heart, and Athens, also well-nigh alone, is chosen as a consequence to do that world-work which we, loosely enough, associate with the name of Hellas. In art, in literature, in science, in philosophy, it is thenceforward Athens through whom and by whom the torch is handed on. Thenceforward the intellectual and spiritual history of Hellas centres in Athens. Look at the greatest names amongst the Hellenes—Pindar, Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Herodotus, Thucydides, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle; of the nine seven are Athenians. Pindar, the man of truth, is by birth a Theban, but in his sympathy wholly an Athenian. Herodotus, the Halicarnassian, himself thoroughly honest of purpose, is chosen necessarily, because an impartial recorder is required, and he, as an Asiatic Hellenic, is able to hold the balance evenly between the rival nations of European Hellas, and hand down to posterity an unbiassed account.

With these two exceptions, as stated above, the intellectual and spiritual glory of Hellas shines out from Athenians. Nor is the reason far to seek. It is not to be looked for in the climate, or soil, or site, or mingling of races in Athens.<sup>2</sup> All these form the environment only, and were undoubtedly used by the great Husbandman for His own purposes. But we must look deeper for the cause, and this is to be found in the honest and good heart which could respond to the voice of the *Logos Spermatikos*, the seed-sowing word. Be it said, with reverence truly, but yet with boldness—for hath not the Master Himself declared it?—The Divine Logos can only work with and in willing instruments. He forces into His service neither the individual nor the aggregate of individuals which we call the nation. What chance then could the Divine seed have had by the wayside of self-indulgent Thessaly, or the shallow soil of jealous, indifferent Argos, or the hard rock of cruel, treacherous Thebes, or among the thorns and briars of selfishness in Sparta? Only amongst a people who could subordinate self to the good of the whole, who could respond to noble and Divine impulses, could the Logos find fitting agents and sow the seed to profit. Hence it is that one after another of the Athenians is called to the glorious work. "To him that hath" the responsive heart, saith the Lord, "shall be given." And never in all the history of the world, so far as the "secular" pen has chronicled it, was progress so rapid made in preparing the way of the Lord, as in the years which begin with the Persian wars and end with Aristotle. A nation equally with an individual must pass through its Calvary to its resurrection, and the absolute self-sacrifice of the Athenians was the gate by which they entered into the glory that followed.

<sup>1</sup> Among the smaller States, Thespiæ and Plataea deserve honourable mention.

<sup>2</sup> See *ante*, p. 150.



## § XII.—PLATO—THE IDEA OF GOD

### I.—PLATO AND THE POPULAR RELIGION

#### (1) WHAT GOD IS NOT. (2) WHAT HE IS

**Plato and the Religion of his Day.**—Before Plato could proceed to demonstrate with any force his own conception of what God *is*, he was obliged, like all reformers, to clear the ground. He had to remove obstructions and show first what God is *not*; to do this he was compelled, like Xenophanes before him, to attack the popular mythological notions. Let us note here, however, that Plato did not attack the popular religion as a whole. To many of the religions, beliefs, and practices of his time, Plato was far from being opposed. On the contrary, it is evident—not only from the reverence with which in the *Republic* and the *Laws* he speaks of Apollo and the venerable Oracle at Delphi, but from many little touches throughout the dialogues—that he appreciates fully the influence of outward religious observances. The picture in the *Lysis* (207 A.) of the Hermæa, the boys sacrificing in white to the patron of athletes—that in the *Republic* (i. 328 C.), of Cephalus, the embodiment of a sunny, peaceful, unselfish old age, sacrificing in his own home to Zeus—the remark in the *Laws* (ii. 653 C.) that the festivals had been instituted for the express purpose of giving men leisure for self-culture: “the gods pitying our life of labour, have given us periods of rest, and Apollo and the Muses and Dionysus as companions, that they may advance our nurture and education”—and the keen insight shown in the direction given in the same dialogue (*Laws*, v. 738 B.) that no change is to be made in religion, and the festivals are to be continued in order that *men may learn to know each other*, in other words, in order to promote peace and goodwill—all this (and much more that might be quoted) shows that Plato was far indeed from depreciating the outward observances of religion. He recognises in them an influence distinctly elevating and refining; his attitude towards them is simply that of one who would fain see them permeated by a higher, purer spirit, for he knows how intimately they are connected with the great unwritten laws, those laws which he compares to the props of builders—“If disregarded,” he says (*Laws*, vii. 793), “they fall out of place and bring ruin on all.” Not against religious observances as such is his “irony” or his censure directed, but against the superstitious way in which they were regarded, as in the case of the mysteries. Nor does he attack any belief in things Divine, in so far as they are truly Divine, and bonds of the Unseen. It is against the anthropomorphism of the day that he wages war—against the prevailing false and unworthy conceptions of God.

Like his master, Socrates, Plato goes to the root of the matter. He attacks not the taught, the multitude, but the teachers, the poets. He finds the poison-spring in the pictures of the gods, above all in those given by Homer and Hesiod, and accordingly with these two he will make no truce. Of the poets as a class he is no lover—they are mere “imitators at third hand,” whom he caricatures on every occasion; but it is on Homer that his

heaviest anger falls, as that of Socrates had more deservedly fallen on Hesiod.

Plato can make no allowance for progress, for the intellectual growth of the centuries which have passed since the Homeric poems came into being—he does not seem to see that Homer may have been as truly as himself a teacher of his own age. The immense influence still exercised by Homer, the influence of which we have a picture in the *Ion* (535)—the great audience of 20,000 assembled at the Panathenæa to listen to the State-prescribed recital of *Iliad* or *Odyssey*—the rhapsodist clad in purple, with golden crown and wand of office, holding the people spellbound by the magic of the poet, moving them now to laughter, now to tears—the 20,000 upturned faces on which are stamped successively the varied emotions of the moment, the wonder, pity, sternness, called forth by the words of the speaker: the thought of all this, an influence which he is powerless to arrest, seems only to have inspired Plato with greater zeal in his determination to expose the Homeric conceptions of the Divine—to show Homer as he really was—in Plato's eyes—and, it must be conceded, in regard to Plato's age. Plato was right in his estimate of the disastrous effect of much in the Homeric poems on the men of his own day—and therefore the idol must fall—it must be broken to pieces.<sup>1</sup>

The main points of Plato's indictment against Homer and the poets may be summed up briefly as follows (*Rep.*, ii. 377 E., 378 C.): (1) He accuses them of fabricating that "greatest of lies against the greatest"—the tales of Uranus and Kronus,<sup>2</sup> and of the disputes and wars amongst the gods; (2) of making God the author of evil, in that He instigates to the violation of the solemn oaths and covenant, and to contention (379 C.); (3) of saying that He deceives men by sending a lying dream and changing His form (380 D., 383); (4) of representing the gods as not only behaving in an undignified manner by giving way to immoderate laughter, but as indulging passion and appetite (389, 390 B.); (5) of depicting them as partial and capricious in the bestowal of their favours, giving to many good men trials and a sad life, and to bad men the very reverse (364 B., 379 D.); (6) of saying that the gods have made vice easy and pleasant, but virtue hard and toilsome (364 C.); (7) of representing the gods as bribing men, as it were, to goodness and virtue, by promising them rewards and blessings in this life (362 E.); (8) of saying that the gods themselves in turn may be bribed by prayers and sacrifices, and their anger

<sup>1</sup> Yet, as Plato himself avows, he shrinks from the task—he says in the *Republic* (x. 595 C.) that a certain love and reverence which he has had for Homer from his childhood hinder him from speaking freely, for Homer is the great teacher and leader of all the noble tragic company—but—"the man must not be honoured before the truth," and therefore the truth about Homer must be spoken. Who, he asks (x. 599 C.), has ever been really educated or improved by Homer? Was he a great legislator like Lycurgus? or did he help his followers by giving them a wise and good way of life, like Pythagoras? No; we may call him the greatest of poets if we like. To this title Plato will not dispute Homer's claim; but as to calling him the educator of Hellas, or studying him so as to regulate one's life by him—of that Plato will not hear. Yet there is, after all, far more in common between Homer and Plato than the latter is at all aware of—the *aidōs* drives him to expose Homer as it drove Achilles to pursue Hector, and yet the *aidōs* was in the heart of both philosopher and poet as it was in the heart of both heroes. It is consoling to lovers of Homer to find that in his old age Plato is a little less unjust to the old master. He has liberated his soul by showing wherein he who was in truth the leader of the makers of Hellas had erred and gone astray, and he can now afford to love and enjoy him. He brings back the memories of early days and strikes a true chord when he says (*Laws*, ii. 658) that the greatest of pleasures to an old man is neither to listen to tragedy nor yet to comedy, but simply to hear a rhapsodist reciting well the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey*.

<sup>2</sup> See *Hellas*. Of these tales, given in the *Theogony* of Hesiod, Homer was, as we have seen, perfectly innocent. They are the inventions (or Phœnician importations) of a later age (p. 311).



appeared thereby (364 B., D., E.). (9) He further accuses the poets of producing unmanly cowardice by their descriptions of death (386); and (10) of painting degrading and demoralising pictures of the life after death (363 C.).

Our examination of Homer and Hesiod has shown us that the foregoing accusations are true in the main. Zeus and the gods of Homer and Hesiod are very far indeed from approaching Plato's standard either of the Divine or of a noble human character. On these details we need not linger; the whole survey of Greek thought up to the protest of Xenophanes and the appearance of Socrates has made us familiar with them. We would only point out in passing that Plato is often—no doubt quite unconsciously—unjust to the poets. Sometimes the passages which he quotes from them are reprehensible, not in themselves, but in the use made of them by the unscrupulous sophists and teachers of the day, who wrested what suited their purpose from the context and gave it altogether a new meaning. The passage in the *Iliad*, for example, where Phoenix warns Achilles against the harbouring of his implacable resentment, and reminds him that even the gods may be turned by the prayers and humble vows and offerings of men, is one of the most beautiful and touching in Homer. Nevertheless, Plato is, as it were, obliged to include it in his denunciation, for it has been twisted to a hateful purpose—the “prayers” have become “magic spells” by which the gods can be bound even to evil, the “vows and offerings” bribes by which they may be turned. All this, with its disastrous effects, will engage our attention later on. Here we mention this practice of deceitfully wresting the text of our author as explanatory of much of Plato's indignation against the poets. They should not have written, he implies, in a way that was liable to such misinterpretation!

Then again it is not difficult for us to see that Plato standing, prophetically, on the eve of the new dispensation—anticipating it, as it were—was not in a position to grasp the full import of the older period. When he denounces Homer and Hesiod for promising temporal blessings to the righteous—the oaks bearing acorns on their tops and bees in their middle, the thick-wooled sheep bowed down by fleecy weight, the black earth bringing forth wheat and barley, the very sea yielding fish abundantly for the god-fearing and the just—he does not see that such incentives formed part of the necessary training of man. First the natural, then the spiritual. Jehovah Himself proceeded on no other lines in the education of His ancient people Israel. All this is perfectly plain to us, but we can easily see that it could not be so evident to Plato; and bearing this in mind we must sympathise in full with his noble indignation against the sophistical arguments of those who used the promises of heavenly blessings as bribes to righteousness, instead of setting forth the unspeakable dignity and blessedness of the possession of righteousness in itself.

Plato, however, does not content himself, like the Sophists, with pointing out inconsistencies, and then leaving matters in apparently hopeless confusion. He points out error in order to get rid of it, as men pull down a hideous and unsightly building in order that the ground may be clear for the erection of a temple noble and grandly proportioned. And therefore he immediately proceeds to lay down, as the basis and very foundation-stone of his temple, two grand thoughts or first principles.

**I. God is good, and the Author of good.**—Of good only and not of evil. Ought not God, he asks (*Rep.*, ii. 379 *et seq.*), to be represented always as *He is*? And that being admitted, how can we represent Him otherwise than as He is in reality—*good*?—Can the good do harm?—Certainly not. And if it cannot harm, can it do evil? No.—And can that which does no evil

be the *cause* of evil?—Impossible?—Then, again, we admit that the good is beneficial? And therefore the *cause* of well-being? Yes.—It follows, therefore, says Plato, that God, since He is good, is not the cause of all things, as the many say, but He is the cause of a few only of the things that happen to men, and blameless as regards most. For the goods of life are far fewer than the evils, and of the goods there is no other author than God, but we must seek the source of the evils elsewhere, and not in God.

Hence the poet must not be allowed to say that the miseries which men bring upon themselves by their own fault are the work of God. Or, if he maintain that they do proceed from God, he must say that God, in bringing those miseries on man, did what was just and good, and that they were benefited by being punished. But—that those who are enduring a penalty are miserable, and that God is the author of their misery—this the poet must not be allowed to say; although he may say that the wicked are miserable because they need correction, and that by suffering the penalty of God they are benefited. But—that God, being good, is the author of evil to any one—this is a statement which must be earnestly combated in every way, and must neither be said nor heard by young or old, whether it be couched in verse or in prose, for such fictions are neither pleasing to God nor profitable to us, nor consistent in themselves. This, then, is Plato's first principle, his first foundation-stone, that God is not the cause of all things, but of the good only.

And the second is like unto it. It is this—

**II. God is True; God is Simple; He changes not; neither doth He deceive** (*Rep.*, ii. 380 D. *et seq.*).—God cannot change: the best human things change least—this lies in their very nature—the strongest human body, the bravest, and wisest souls are least affected by outward circumstance—how, then, can He who is emphatically the best be liable to change from without? But can He change from *within*? Can He will to change? Impossible! How can He who is the most beautiful and most excellent wish to change, since such change could only be for the worse? But, again, can God deceive? Can He will to lie either in word or deed? Can He deceive men in the noblest part of their nature, about the highest matters, even Himself? Can God take part in what Plato calls “the true lie,” that is “deception within the soul itself, the being deceived and ignorant about the highest realities. There, in the noblest part of ourselves—*there* to have and to hold a lie—this is what men would least of all choose, most of all hate.” Can we believe that God would Himself deceive us about Himself? Impossible! There is no motive such as actuates men which could move God to lie. “In every way the superhuman and divine is free from falsehood, perfectly free. God is absolutely SIMPLE and TRUE in deed and in word. He changes not, neither does He deceive by words or by the signs which He sends, either in waking vision or in a dream.”

Note the beautiful expression, God is *simple*—*haplous*—single, without folds—in Him is no variableness neither shadow of turning. That He is simple and true, that He changes not—this is Plato's second foundation-stone.

I. God is good and the author of good only.

II. God is simple and true—He changes not.

## II. GOD IN RELATION TO THE VISIBLE WORLD—GOD AS THE CREATOR

In attempting within the brief space at our disposal to give a survey of the views of the great thinker of Hellas on the highest of all subjects, we must take the very bold course of beginning with a dialogue, which is at once the



most difficult of all the Platonic works and, in parts, to us moderns, even repellent—the *Timæus*. If our object were simply to exhibit a beautiful mind showing itself in language no less beautiful, we certainly should not begin with the *Timæus*—we should turn with eagerness to the *Phædo* or the *Phædrus*, to the *Symposium* or the *Republic*. Nevertheless, the *Timæus* for our present purpose is of the deepest importance, and—its difficulties once mastered—we shall find not only that it supplies the answer to many questions raised by the other dialogues, but that, despite the drawbacks on the surface, it abounds in the most noble and far-reaching thoughts.

As we have hinted, the language itself is difficult and in places obscure. For this there are two causes—first, that Plato is evidently following some Pythagorean model and makes great use of mathematical reasoning; and, secondly, that he is grappling with what to him is a new subject—natural science.

The *Timæus* professes to give an account of the creation of the world, but it is not content to deal only with the theological side of the question. In working out his plan Plato brings in theories of the most varied kind—astronomical, chemical, mineralogical, anatomical, physiological, pathological—and the attempt to give adequate expression to his conceptions of these subjects at a time when scientific nomenclature was in its infancy, must have been fraught with immense difficulty. Aristotle is justly praised for the great services which he rendered both to science and philosophy by the clearness and precision of his language, but it must not be forgotten that Aristotle followed Plato and still later writers, and had the benefit of their labours, just as Plato himself reaped the fruits of those who before him had acted as pioneers in the field. Plato is as keen a *logodædalus*<sup>1</sup> as Aristotle, and the difficulties with which he had to contend were greater.

Then, again, natural science had no attractions in itself for Plato, and he has told us why: “Even if a man imagines that he is inquiring into nature (*peri physeōs*),” he says (*Phil.*, 59), “you know that he is really occupied with things of this world—how it arose, and how it is changed and changes. This is the sort of inquiry in which his life is spent. His labour is bestowed, not on that which always *is*—(true being, the things of eternity)—“but on things which are becoming,” *i.e.* entering for a brief space into existence, and then vanishing.

This then is the true reason why Plato passes over nature-studies—they belong to the perishing things of time, and are already, when we examine them, being swept along by the river of Heracleitus. Plato has elected to labour for the meat that perisheth not, and therefore it is that philosophy absorbs his whole soul—because it deals with the things that are eternal and unchanging.

So marked is this neglect of natural science in his other works, that some writers have hesitated on this account to include the *Timæus* among the genuine works of Plato. The doubt, however, is now allowed on all sides to be unfounded. No critic can now dispute its claim to be the product of Plato's intellect. We can see, moreover, that, viewed in their connection with things eternal, the things of time do possess an intense and abiding interest even for men of Plato's mental bias, and it is precisely in this light that they are treated by him in our dialogue. Its very object is to try to explain the connection between the eternal and the transitory—to determine the relative place of both in that grand conception of the world harmony which forms the centre of the Platonic system. The *Timæus* itself is not the centre of that system; but

<sup>1</sup> Word-coiner.

without it the system as a whole would have been incomplete—without it, as stated above, we should have been left in doubt as to Plato's real mind on many important points. With the *Timæus* in our hand, we go back upon the other dialogues, and find that it explains and sheds a light upon them all.

With the scientific and most difficult parts of the dialogue we have, strictly speaking, nothing to do in our present inquiry; but we may just note in passing that it was impossible for Plato to labour even in a domain uncongenial to him without producing genuine fruit. Flashes of genius (which have inspired many other investigators) light up the whole work, and in more than one instance we find the discoveries of our own age anticipated.<sup>1</sup>

One other preliminary observation, and then we pass on to the work itself. We must note beforehand that Plato's account of the Creation takes the form of a story or "mythos," but it does not follow that Plato expected his hearers to accept his mythos in the sense of history. His cosmogony is not put forward like the *Theogony* of Hesiod, as a true and genuine record of events that actually occurred at one period of the world's history. The very reverse is the case. Timæus, the narrator, reminds his audience no less than six times (*Tim.*, 29, 48, 51, 55, 59, 72) that he is only giving them a "probable account." "Do not be surprised, Socrates," he says in one place (*Tim.*, 29 C.), "if, amid the many things that have been spoken concerning the gods and the origin of the universe—we are not able to advance a wholly consistent and precise statement. You must rather be satisfied if our account is as *probable* as any other, bearing in mind that I, the speaker, and you, my judges, are only mortal men."

Plato has glimpses of the truth—he "touches" it in his seeking, now and again; but he is not in possession of the whole truth, and he does not imagine that he is. For the presentation of this shadowy "dawning" truth, the form of the myth seems to the poet-philosopher the most suitable. He often makes use of it elsewhere, as we shall see, and such myths he calls (*Gorgias*, 523) "true" myths—*i.e.* myths that hold beneath the mythical, symbolical, or allegorical veil, an element of real truth. "To find out the Maker and Father of this universe," he says, "is difficult, and when we have found Him, to speak of Him to all men is impossible"<sup>2</sup>—impossible, that is, to give such expression to the dawning truth as shall make it clear to all men. And therefore it is

<sup>1</sup> *e.g.* Hearing is produced, according to Plato, by a blow which disturbs the air, and sets it vibrating more or less rapidly (our sound-waves). Again, in his account of the solubility of some of the elements and of the bodies formed out of them, he at least foreshadows the course of scientific chemistry. Further, we may note that he conjectures the close union of the respiratory and nutritive processes, although he does not know the blood-oxidising activity of the lungs; he even gives fire a rôle therein, and makes the blood arise from a sort of burning process, thus anticipating the results of modern research, and to this he attributes its red colour (Liebig's *Letters on Chemistry*, 22). He speaks also of a continual decay by fire and air going on in the organism, and of the necessity of a continual replacement by nourishment akin in its composition to that of the human frame, and easily assimilated. These he finds mainly in plants, and recommends, like Pythagoras, a vegetable diet. Finally, we may note that he gives to plants a nature akin to that of animals, and here once more anticipates modern science in its discovery of the similarity of animal and vegetable cells (Liebig, *Letters* 25 and 29. See Steinhart's able introduction to Miller's translation of the *Timæus*, pp. 60, 61, 127, 128).

All this belongs rather to the history of the Greek experiments in science than to our present subject, but we have thought it well to call attention to Plato's notions here, premising that our philosopher would himself have been the first to repudiate any claim to the title of "physiologist." He was no inquirer into nature, and we must therefore look upon his anticipations of modern science rather as the brilliant conjectures of a clear-sighted man of genius than as the results of patient experiment. In this light Plato, beyond a doubt, himself regarded his "guesses at truth." They represent, according to him, the probable.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. St. Paul's "things which it is not lawful"—*i.e.* possible—"to utter."



that he chooses the form of the "true myth," as being that which will be most readily understood.

As Steinhart beautifully remarks (Intro. to Müller's transl. of the *Timæus*, p. 74): "The myths of Plato connect as by a bridge of air two contrary but never separated worlds." The bridge itself has no substantial existence, nevertheless it serves the purpose of bearing us from the world of becoming and perishing to the world of true being, from the land of mortality to that of immortality, from the things of time to the things of eternity. "The probable in Plato's sense is the nearest approach to truth that is possible."

Having now (as we hope) enlisted the interest of the reader in this great work, we may proceed to give such a summary of those parts of it which concern us more immediately, as will enable us at least to grasp the salient points.

### PLATO'S ACCOUNT OF THE CREATION OF THE WORLD.

"It is now your turn to speak, Timæus," says Socrates, "after you have, as is customary, called upon the gods."

"All men do that, Socrates," Timæus replies, "who are in any degree right minded. At the beginning of any enterprise, great or small, they always call upon God (*Theos*)."

Before proceeding with his narrative, Timæus asks and answers three questions of great importance.

(1) *First question*.—The first thing we have to do, he says, is, in my opinion, to distinguish between that which *always is*, and had no beginning (the eternal), and that which is *always becoming* (entering into existence only to perish) and never really *is*. That which is apprehended by thought and reason *always is*, and is the same (the eternal and unchanging); that which is apprehended without reason by the help of the senses is in a process of becoming and perishing, and never really *is*. Now everything that becomes or is created must of necessity be produced by some cause; for it is impossible that anything can be created without a cause.

Was, then, the Kosmos (the wondrously-ordered universe) always in existence, without a beginning? or was it created and had a beginning?

*Answer*: I reply, It was created, for it is visible and tangible and has a body, and all things that are apprehended by the senses (may be seen, felt, handled) are created.

(2) *Second question*.—If then the world was created and if everything that is created must have a cause—how shall we find out the Maker and Father of this universe? And when we have found Him, how shall we speak of Him?

*Answer*: We shall find Him and trace out His nature and His mode of working by asking yet another question: In every act of creation (Divine or human) there are two modes of procedure: If the *demiurgus* or master-builder looks to the things that are eternal and unchanging, and works out his plan on an eternal pattern, what he produces must of necessity be wholly beautiful, but if he looks to the things that perish, and fashions after a created pattern, his work is not beautiful. After which pattern, then, did the master-builder fashion the world?—after the abiding and unchangeable pattern or after the fashion of things that perish?

*Answer*: If this our world is indeed *beautiful* and the Maker of it is *good*, it is plain that He must have looked to that which is eternal. And certainly, every one must see that the framer of the world looked to the eternal, for the

world is of all creations the most beautiful, and He is of all causes the best. Being thus created, the world has been framed with a view to the things that are apprehended by thought and reason and are unchanging.

(3) *Third question.*—But, let us ask, *Why* did God make the world?

*Answer:* He was good, and with the good no jealousy can ever in any way arise. And being free from jealousy He willed that all things should be as like unto Himself as possible. Most justly may we accept this—on the testimony of thoughtful men—as the chief cause of creation and of the world—God willed that all things should be good, and nothing as far as possible bad.

**God's Method of Working.**—Perceiving then, that everything that was visible was not at rest, but moving in a faulty and irregular way, He brought order out of disorder, deeming order to be far better than disorder. Now, to Him who is the best, there neither has been (hitherto) nor is there now, any other law of work than the law of the most beautiful; and when He reflected upon the things that are visible by nature, He found that nothing devoid of mind (*nous* = intelligence, reason) was ever more beautiful, taken as a whole, than that which possesses mind, taken as a whole; and that mind could not possibly exist in anything (material) apart from soul (*psychē*—the living sentient nature).

For these reasons He placed mind in soul, and soul in body, and framed the universe so that it might be the most beautiful and the best work in the order of Nature. Thus, using the language of probability, we must acknowledge that this world became a living creature, endowed with soul and with mind in truth, in the providence of God.

Before proceeding further, let us gather up the chief points in this most beautiful præmium:—

(1) *The grand distinction between the unchanging and the transient.*—The unchanging apprehended only by thought and reason; the transient by opinion and the senses. The unchanging is eternal, has no beginning; the transient has a beginning and a cause.

(2) *The two patterns and the two laws of work.*—The eternal and the perishing.

(3) *The inscrutability of God.*—How can we find Him, the Maker and Father of all? *Answer:* The Kosmos proclaims Him. "Every one must see that the world is the most beautiful of creations and its Master-builder the best of causes."

(4) *Why did God make the world?*—Because He is good, because in Him jealousy can have no place,—because He willeth that all should be as like unto Himself as possible—an answer as sublime as it is true.

(5) *How did God make the world?*—By the law of His own nature, the law of the most beautiful.

(6) *What is the most beautiful?*—(a) That which possesses mind = intelligence; (b) that which possesses order = harmony.

How much have these few sentences already revealed to us of the nature of God! He is unchanging, eternal, invisible, only to be apprehended by thought; He is good; He is free from jealousy and human weakness; He delights in beauty, order, intelligence—they are the very law (*themis*) of His Being.

**The Body of the Universe.**—When God framed the universe, He willed to make it *one visible living creature*, as like as possible to that which is of all things conceivable the most beautiful and in every way perfect (*i.e.* the heavenly pattern, the invisible world of ideas). And therefore the universe



is to be conceived of as one (not as many worlds) comprehending within itself all other living creatures.

Now that which is created must have a body, so that it may be visible and tangible. Without fire it would not be visible; unless it were solid, it could not be tangible, and without earth it could not be solid. Wherefore God first made the universe of fire and earth, and then bound these together in the best possible way by means of air and water, harmonising the four elements in due proportion, so that they stand firm in the unity of friendship, and are indissoluble by any other than the hand of Him who bound them thus together.

Now when the Creator thus united the whole of the elements—fire, water, air, and earth collectively—He left behind no part nor power of any one of them, it being His purpose, first, that the living creature should be, as far as possible, a perfect whole, made up of perfect parts; secondly, that it should be one, nothing being left behind out of which another similar universe might be made; and thirdly, that it should be unageing and free from disease. For these ends, the universe was made one whole, made up of entire parts, and therefore perfect, ageless, and not subject to disease.

“And he gave to the universe the form which was proper and natural. Now for the living creature which was to embrace within itself all other living creatures, that form was fitting which comprehends within itself all other forms; wherefore on this account he made it *spherical*, like to a globe, rounded as by a lathe, equally distant everywhere from the middle to the extremities—of all forms the most perfect and the most like to itself, for He considered that the like is infinitely more beautiful than the unlike.

This great living creature has neither eyes nor ears nor breathing apparatus, nor organs wherewith to receive nourishment, for all these would have been useless to him, inasmuch as there is nothing visible, nothing to hear, no air to breathe outside of himself; he nourishes himself by his own decay, and by design is so formed that he does and suffers all things in himself and by himself, for his maker considered that to be self-sufficing is better than to be dependent on others. Hands and feet he has none, nor any of the seven movements except that which is most appropriate to his form and akin to mind and reflection, wherefore he revolves in the same way and in the same course, turning within himself in a circle.

**The Soul of the Universe.**—Such was the scheme of the Eternal God concerning the god that was to be. . . . And He placed a soul in the centre, and diffused it throughout the whole, and also spread it around and without the body. And He formed the one single solitary heaven, a circle revolving in a circle, able by its own excellence to hold converse with itself, and requiring no companion, being sufficient as friend and lover for itself. And in all these ways He fashioned him (the universe) to be a blessed god.

But the soul was not created last, although we speak of her in this order, as though God had made her to be the younger creation; for having joined them together, He would never have suffered the elder to be ruled by the younger—this we said heedlessly, being ourselves greatly affected by chance; but He made the soul, the first and elder by birth as well as excellence, to be the mistress and ruler of the body, over which she holds sway; and He formed her out of the following elements and in the following way: Of the indivisible and eternal essence, that which is always the same, He took one part, and of the divisible substance of the body another part, and a third part, or intermediate species, He formed by mixing together the two first. Then, taking the three substances, He mingled them all into one form (idea), and

the uncongenial element (the corporeal and earthly), which was difficult to mix, He brought into union with that which is always the same (the eternal and heavenly) by force. ". . . And when the Creator had thus made the soul and diffused her throughout and around the whole body of the universe, she began the divine beginning of an endless rational life throughout all time. And the body of the universe is visible, but the soul is invisible, and she even partakes of the reason and harmony of intelligent beings, and having been created by Him who is the best, she is herself the best of all things that are created.

**Chief Points.**—Before proceeding further, let us again gather up into a focus the leading ideas in Plato's theory.

(1) *The universe as a rational living creature.*—That a great thinker like Plato should have conceived of the universe as endowed with rational life, with mind and soul, able to think and reflect, may come upon some of us as an unwelcome surprise. Nevertheless, to antiquity there was no other way of explaining natural phenomena either of the heavens or of the earth—the movements of the heavenly bodies or the periodical return of the seasons—except by some such hypothesis. Explanation by natural law was as yet undreamt of, although indeed it lies so close to Plato's theory that it seems almost within his grasp.

Nevertheless, let us note well that although Plato believes in the universal soul, he is no pantheist. God, in his view, is perfectly distinct from matter. This is proved by his statement that the world, although a "blessed god," is yet created by the ETERNAL GOD, and although it has a soul, yet this soul is only partly formed of the indivisible unchanging Divine Essence, whilst its body can be dissolved again into the original four elements of which it is composed at the pleasure of Him who bound them together.

(2) *The universe as one, or whole made up of entire and perfect parts.*—Let us ponder well the grand idea involved in the statement, repeated with emphasis several times, that the universe is one, not many independent worlds. This is nothing less than the central idea of the world-harmony, the mutual interdependence of the heavenly bodies, an idea originally Pythagorean but developed by Plato. H. Müller has a good note on this passage:—

"The Heaven," he says, "or the world-order, or the all—Timæus uses all these terms to express the same idea, what we understand by 'the universe'—forms a whole; there is only one world, not many worlds independent one of the other. This was the teaching of Pythagoras as of the Platonic Timæus, and with this assertion the discoveries of modern astronomers are in accord. It becomes more and more probable that the most distant stars and world-systems obey one law, that of gravity, and exercise a mutual influence one on the other."

The Pythagorean-Platonic theory of the oneness of the universe is, therefore, another of those grand "guesses at truth" which proved so fruitful.

(3) *The union of the elements.*—In this we have another application of the same grand law of harmony. What can be more opposed in their nature than fire and water, air and earth? And yet the opposition between them is overcome so entirely that the balance of the universe is maintained by the "friendship" of the elements—a Platonic expression for perfect proportion. None outweighs or crushes the other, a pregnant idea which he works out afterwards in the moral world (Steinhardt, *Introduction*, p. 92).

(4) *The form and movement of the universe.*—Fresh developments of the



law of harmony. The spherical form is not only that which would least lend itself to any attempt at personification of the universal living creature, but it is also the most harmonious. In the same way and for the same reason, the only movement allowed to the universe is that which is "most appropriate to its form, and akin to mind and reflection." The universe revolves and turns within itself, as thought turns, so to speak, and revolves within the brain. The six less perfect movements—backwards and forwards, to right and left, up and down—are not given to the universe, and the motive is obvious—any one of them would have taken it out of the perfect harmony of its course (Steinhardt, *Introd.*, p. 93).

(5) *The soul older than, and mistress of, the body.*—This doctrine we shall meet with so often in the course of our investigation, that here we need do no more than draw attention to it. The priority, supremacy, and superiority of the soul forms one of the main pillars of the Platonic system. Remove this, and the whole building falls to pieces—hence the apology of Timæus for having inadvertently mentioned the body before the soul.

(6) Finally, let us note the two further developments of Plato's conception of the Mind of God—one intensely Greek, the other as intensely Aryan:—

(a) *The Greek thought.*—God considered that "the like is infinitely more beautiful than the unlike." Here we have the Hellenic love for proportion, symmetry, quiet grace—the aversion to startling and violent contrasts.

(b) *The Aryan thought.*—God considered that "to be self-sufficing is better than to be dependent on others." Can we wonder that Plato the Hellene should have transferred this, one of the root-principles of all original experiment, of all creation, to the Mind of the Creator? He enunciates here, as it were, the law of work for the whole Aryan race—the law of independence, of individuality.

**The Joy of God in His Creation.**—Now when the Father and Creator perceived the image which He had made of the eternal gods moving and living, He was delighted, and in His joy He resolved to make it yet more like the pattern on which He had framed it, for as the pattern—the living being—was eternal, He had endeavoured to make it as far as possible the same.

**God creates Time.**—Now the nature of the *living* being is eternal, and to impart it wholly to the creature is impossible. But He resolved to make a moving image of eternity; and as He set in order the heaven, He made that which we call time to be an eternal image—moving in accordance with number—of the eternal things that abide in unity. For days and nights and months and years were not in existence before the heaven was created, but He devised that they should come into being together with it. All these are parts of time, and the past—that which was—and the future—that which shall be—are created species of time, which we unconsciously, but wrongly, transfer to the eternal essence. For we say, indeed, that "He was, is, and will be"; but, speaking in accordance with truth, "He is" alone fittingly expresses Him, and the "was" and "will be" are properly used only in reference to things generated in time, for these are movements; whereas that which is immovably the same is not concerned with time. The "was" and the "will be" are conceptions of time when it intimates eternity, moving in a circle regulated by number.

Such, then, was the birth of time out of the Mind and Thought of God, and in order to accomplish this work, "He made the sun and moon and five other stars, which are called the wanderers (planets), for the purpose of distinguishing and preserving the numbers of time. And when God made the bodies of the stars, He gave to each an orbit . . . seven orbits for the seven

stars. The moon He placed in the orbit nearest the earth, and the sun in the second nearest, beyond the earth," and so on. . . .

And that there might be some visible measure of the relative slowness and swiftness of the eight heavenly bodies as they moved in their courses, God kindled a light in that star whose orbit is second in nearness to the earth, that which we have just called the sun, in order that the whole heaven might be made manifest as far as possible, and that such living creatures as were by nature fitted for it might participate in number, learning this from the revolutions of the heavenly bodies.

**Points.** (1) **Resemblances between the Mosaic and the Platonic Accounts of Creation.**—We can hardly be surprised that Plato was long supposed to have borrowed his account of Creation from the Hebrew Scriptures—a theory now entirely discredited. The resemblances are great and striking—"the earth was without form"—Plato's chaos, the order of Creation God's joy in His work—but the resemblances are outweighed by the differences. It is essentially a Greek and not a Hebrew presentation with which we have to do. Between the universe as conceived of in the Mosaic account of Creation and Plato's universal living creature, there is no compatibility.

(2) Note the grand conception of the eternal nature of God. "HE IS" alone expresses it. "I AM" is God's self-revelation in the Old Testament as in the New (Exod. ii. 14; St. John viii. 58).

(3) Note the explanation of the purpose for which light is handled—"that the whole heaven might be made manifest, in order that such creatures as were by nature fitted for it (human beings) might participate in number," *i.e.* in order, rhythm, and harmony, "learning this from the revolutions of the heavenly bodies." This teleological view of the universe, the grand purpose for which it was formed, is a great development on the Socratic doctrine of utility—nevertheless, it is a development only.

**The Four Races.**—When the universe was first made, it had within it no living creatures, but now the Creator supplied this want, framing them, as before, after the nature of the pattern—the invisible world of ideas. He devised four races—one, the heavenly race of the gods; another, the birds that cleave the air; the third, the species that dwell in water; the fourth, the animals that go on foot on the dry land.

**Creation of the Visible Gods.**—The Divine race He fashioned mostly of fire, that they might appear the brightest and most beautiful to sight, and He made each a fair round globe, like to the universe, and gave them to know the best and to follow that, distributing them all over the circle of the heaven, that it might be in very deed a brilliant Kosmos throughout (a world of light exemplifying the grand world order). . . .

"And the fixed stars also He made to be living creatures, Divine and eternal, ever-abiding, and revolving in the same way and in the same place. . . ."

"And earth, which is our nurse—fastened (or circling)<sup>1</sup> round the pole which is extended throughout the universe—He devised to be the guardian and maker (*dēmiurgos*) of night and day, the first and eldest of the gods that are in the interior of heaven. . . ."

<sup>1</sup> The word *ekklomenē* has this double significance, hence it is uncertain whether Plato believed that the earth remained immovably fixed in the centre of the universe—stretched on the world-pole, while the heavenly bodies revolved around her—or whether he conceived of the earth as circling round the world-axis which is to be understood as only a prolongation of her own. Commentators are divided on the point; but the first interpretation, viz. that the earth does not move, is confirmed by other passages in Plato (Müller's Translation, Note 62, p. 275).



To attempt, however, to describe the figures of the heavenly bodies when they meet as in a choral dance and return again on their orbits—or one veiled from sight (eclipsed) and appear again, sending fears upon those who do not understand the real meaning of their movements, and take them to be signs of coming events—would be labour in vain. “Let this suffice as to the nature of the visible and created gods.”

**Creation of the Invisible Gods.**—To speak of the other gods, however (the gods of tradition), and to know their origin, Timæus declares to be beyond his powers: “We must,” he says, “believe those who spoke of old. Being descendants of the gods, as they declared, they must clearly have known the truth about their own ancestors. It is impossible not to believe the sons of the gods.” And what these sons of the gods had handed down is, that the children of Heaven and Earth (*Ouranos* and *Gē*) were Oceanus and Tethys; that from these again sprang Phorkys and Kronus and Rhea, and those who were born after them; and from Kronus and Rhea sprang Zeus and Hera, and all who are known as their brethren; and from these again others are descended.

**Address of the Eternal God to the Created Gods.**—Now when all the gods had come into existence, both those who are visible and are called Wanderers (the Planets), and those who only appear when they will (the gods of tradition), the Creator of the universe spake to them as follows:—

“Gods of Divine origin, my works, ye of whom I am the Creator (*dēmiourgos*) and Father, that which has been created by me, is indissoluble, without my will. Now all that has once been bound together may be dissolved again, but to wish to dissolve that which is happy and beautifully harmonised were the wish of an evil being. You, inasmuch as you have been created, are neither immortal or altogether indissoluble; but ye shall certainly not be dissolved nor liable to the fate of death, for ye have in my will a stronger and more powerful bond than those by which ye were bound when ye were created. Hear ye now my instructions: There yet remain three mortal races to be created; unless they come into existence, the universe will not be complete, for it will not contain all the races of living creatures which it must have, if it is to be perfect. But if these were created and received life through me, they would be on an equality with the gods. In order, therefore, that there may be mortals, and that the universe may be really all-embracing, do ye apply yourselves, according to your nature, to the fashioning of living creatures, and imitate the power displayed by me in your own creation. That part of them which is fittingly called immortal—the Divine—which shall be a leader and guide to such of them as are willing ever to follow justice and the gods—the seed and beginning of this, I myself will give you; but the rest, do ye. Around the immortal, weave mortality; form and fashion living creatures; provide food for them, let them increase, and receive them again in death.”

Thus He spake, and again poured the remains of the elements into the cup in which He had previously mingled the world-soul, and mixed them somewhat in the same manner—no longer, however, pure as before, but diluted to the second and third degree. And when He had framed the whole, He divided the souls in numbers equal to the stars, assigning a soul to each star, and having placed them as in a chariot, He showed them the nature of the Universe, and declared to them the unalterable laws decreed for them.

What these laws were, and how the created gods succeeded in the task assigned them, we shall show in a later section. With the delivery of the laws the active part taken by the Creator ceases. He leaves His injunctions to His children, and He Himself remains “in His own place.”

**Chief Points.**—Let us briefly note the following:—

(1) *The created gods.*—We may be surprised that Plato, after rising to the conception of the One Supreme God, should have deliberately gone out of his way, as it were, to introduce other gods. One explanation would seem to offer itself in the Hellenic aversion to abrupt transitions. Between the Supreme, Eternal God and frail humanity there must be, he implies, some intermediate stage, and the beings who belong to this intermediate stage are, moreover, necessary to his purpose.

One thing, however, is abundantly clear, viz. that Plato is no polytheist. His "gods," like the universe, are created and dissoluble at the will of the Creator. The part they play is simply that of ministers or delegates who carry out the purposes of the Creator.<sup>1</sup> We may regard them as Divine forces, if we will, although they seem to correspond rather to our conception of the angels, except that they are entrusted with the creation of the animals and the mortal part of man.

Of these created gods there are two classes:—

(a) The visible gods, or heavenly bodies. When we read therefore in the *Laus* that the sun and stars are "gods," we know in what sense the statement is to be taken. They are Divine powers, endowed with rational life, and entitled to reverence on account of their great superiority to man—but they are created, and their nature is not in itself eternal.

(b) The invisible gods, the gods of tradition, i.e. the gods of Homer and Hesiod. Zeus himself—who, as we know, is the representative of the universal Heaven-father, the Aryan Dyauspita, appears in the category of created gods. His functions as ruler are transferred to the supreme God—and rightly, for the true Zeus had become eclipsed. Zeus at the first reigns *alone*, as we have seen; the mythological elements which gathered around him are accretions of later ages—his father and mother, grandfather, brothers, sisters, children, are all gradually evolved in the slow process of time, as the idea of the ONE GOD becomes more and more obscured. Plato therefore does well to introduce the created gods in order to mark this deterioration. He, like Aristotle, recognised in the popular mythology relics and fragments of a more ancient primal truth, and probably his aim here is to show pointedly the antithesis between the primal truth and the popular notions. The true Heaven-father is not the Zeus of poets and mythologers—the latter must take his place as a created god, created out of human fancies.

We need not be surprised, nevertheless, to find Plato himself applying elsewhere the designation "Zeus" to the supreme God. He seems indeed to have had a love for the name; and makes it the subject of one of his curious, and yet instructive etymologies in the *Cratylus* (396). "The name 'Zeus' is, as it were, a sentence," he says, "which we divide into two parts, and some use one part (*Dia*) and some the other (*Zēna*).<sup>2</sup> The two together set forth the nature of the god, for neither to us nor to others is there any cause of life save the ruler and king of all. It is therefore right and fitting that the God

<sup>1</sup> The reader will recollect that in Homer, also, all the other gods are subject to Zeus. Plato's conception, of course, totally transcends the Homeric idea, but this point of contact remains.

<sup>2</sup> Two forms of the accusative. Brugmann shows (*Comparative Grammar of the Indo-Germanic Languages*, vol. i., translation by Dr. Wright, §§ 69 and 498) the process by which the Aryan *Dieus* became Sanscrit *Dyaus*, and Greek *Zeus*—the *di* in Greek becomes *Z* and the digamma is omitted.

Nominative: Zeus (from *Zēus*, *dieus*, *diēus*).

Genitive: Dios (from *diFos*).

Dative: Dii (from *diFi*).

Accusative: Zēn (here the U has disappeared entirely).



who gives life (*Zēn*) always to all living creatures should be so named (*Zēna*).” Etymologically, of course, Plato is hopelessly wrong—“Zeus” is not connected with life, but with light. However, it is not probable that he himself attached importance to any one of his derivations, as such. They are simply pegs on which he hangs some striking thought, and viewed in this light as a revelation of himself, his explanation of the word “Zeus” as the life-giver is very instructive. As to the application of the name to the supreme God, Plato undoubtedly felt with Æschylus.<sup>1</sup> If it be His good pleasure to be called “Zeus” let us invoke Him by this name, time-honoured as it is.

(2) *The preserving bond of life—the will of God.*—Observe, finally, a last revelation of the nature of the eternal God—and a very beautiful one. The created gods may rest assured that, although not in themselves eternal, yet they have in the will of Him who made them the strongest of preserving bonds: “To wish to destroy what is harmonious and happy were the wish of an evil being”—such a wish is therefore impossible to God. He knows not caprice—He can only will and work the good—a bond of anticipation of the apostles, “with Him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning,” and this, as Plato well sees, is the strong ground of confidence for His creatures.

**Some difficulties of the “*Timæus*.”**—With the difficulties, philosophical and scientific, of the *Timæus* we are not concerned here. There are, however, one or two questions which we must consider, briefly, inasmuch as they are intimately connected with Plato’s religious belief.

(1) *God and mortality.*—Why does Plato represent the Creator as retiring from His work before the creation of mortals?

The answer would seem to be partly the one given by himself, viz. that there cannot be a distinction between the created gods and man—man is not to be equal with the gods. Another answer, however, is this, that the statement, “God created *mortality*,” would have been tantamount to saying that “God created *death*,” and from such a statement Plato, like every true Greek, shrank. The reluctance to associate death with the gods is nothing less than a national characteristic. We must recollect Plato’s own interpretation (the “Life-giver”) of the national name for God, and there is historical testimony for the pious dread with which every sign and token of death was removed from Delos, the supposed birthplace of Apollo, the healer.

That Plato does not regard matter *per se* as altogether evil<sup>2</sup> is evident from the statement that the Creator Himself makes use of it in framing the universe. But there lay of necessity in the plan of the *demiurgos*, the creation also of mortal races, and because of necessity these mortals must suffer the pangs of dissolution, therefore Plato hesitates to bring the Creator into immediate contact with matter as connected with mortality. And hence it is, perhaps, that he is represented as relegating the framing of the mortal races to the created gods.

We cannot be surprised that even the most penetrating of ancient thinkers failed to grasp the moral significance of death. Death to us is the punishment of sin—death to the Greeks is necessity—the death due to Nature, the repayment of the borrowed elements.

(2) *God and the creation of matter.*—In the *Timæus* Plato apparently does not rise to the sublime conception of creation by the fiat of the Almighty: “Let there be light, and there was light,” and it has been repeatedly urged against him that he represents the Creator as making use simply of materials already in existence—the *Ur*, or original elements—thus leaving the question of the creation of matter unsolved. This objection is valid so far as

<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, p. 362.

<sup>2</sup> See, however, § 3.

the *Timæus* alone is concerned—the want of clearness on this point is one of the great defects of the work. But, just as the *Timæus* supplements and explains other dialogues, so do they in turn supplement and explain it, and in the *Sophist*—one of Plato's most abstract and logically thought out works—a definition of creation is given, and the relation of God to matter clearly set forth: "There are," he says, "two kinds of creation, Divine and human. By creation we mean every power that brings into existence things which before had no existence. Now," he goes on to ask, "what are we to say concerning the world around us—all the creatures that live and die, the plants that spring from seeds and roots, the lifeless things, soluble and insoluble, that are formed within the earth—shall we maintain that they, having no previous existence, were brought into existence by a creator (a *demiurgus*)—working for the people, who is none other than God, or shall we say with the multitude that Nature gives birth to them from some automatic or accidental cause? Shall we not rather hold that they owe their being to Divine reason and a knowledge which comes from God?"

A little later in the same dialogue (*Sophist*, 265 E., 266 B.), it is stated, not only that "things which are said to be made by Nature are the works of Divine art (*technē*)," but that the materials on which the Divine artist works are created by Him: "We know that we and the other creatures, and the elements out of which things are made—fire, water, and the like—are each and all the creation and work of God—Is it not so?" "It is," rejoins Theætetus.

God, therefore, according to Plato, does create matter, and if he does not expressly say this in the *Timæus*, we may explain the omission by supposing that he regarded creation as a progressive act, and that his "probable account" begins at the point or stage where the Creator proceeds to shape and form the materials previously created.

(3) *Does Plato regard matter as evil?*—At first sight it would seem so, for he says (*Tim.*, 153), that when God undertook to perfect the elements out of which He constructed the world, "they were all in such a condition as we might expect to find them in the absence of God—they had neither form nor number"—but were moving irregularly in chaos. "God made them," adds *Timæus*, "as far as possible the most beautiful and the best out of things which were not beautiful and good."

We must bear in mind here, however, Plato's definition of the "most beautiful"—it is that which possesses mind. Matter, therefore, in his eyes can never be either beautiful or good in itself, or except in so far as it is controlled by mind.

Again, the very qualities of matter, as such, are necessary to the existence of the world as such, and yet they bear within them of necessity a certain something that causes friction and destroys harmony. To be tangible, as Plato tells us, the world must be solid; to be visible it must possess fire—but solidity easily passes into resistance and fire into destruction, except when under the strictest control of guiding reason. Hence from its nature—a nature necessarily suited to its purpose—matter can only be made "as far as possible" the fairest and best.

We shall find that Plato develops this theory in the moral world also, for in the *Statesman* (*Pol.*, 273), he says: "From its constructor (God) the world receives all its beauty, but from its previous condition (*i.e.* from matter in itself as it was before the framing of the universe) it has received whatever of evil and unrighteousness exists within it. This the world has itself from its primal condition, and also reproduces in living creatures." We shall see when



we come to study Plato's theory of the constitution of man how he works out this idea.

(4) *God and necessity*.—When Timæus has ended his narrative of the creation, he begins afresh to describe various matters in greater detail, and this new phase of the discussion he opens with the (to us) startling statement that the "creation of the world is mixed, and was produced by the union of mind and necessity" (*Tim.*, 48). Mind here is God,<sup>1</sup> but what is necessity (*anankē*)? Can it be that Plato, after all, accepts the popular fatalistic theory that the world is dominated by a gloomy, all-powerful necessity, to which even God Himself is subject? Assuredly not. Plato himself dispels the doubt, for he adds immediately: "For mind, the ruler of necessity, persuaded her to bring the greater part of created things to perfection." Necessity is simply that which must be—what we should nowadays call natural law, the action of material forces. Over necessity God stands supreme; but although the ruler He is represented as "persuading" her, for to a Greek and especially to Plato, persuasion is always better than force. Nevertheless, as we have seen (p. 553), the uncongenial and intractable forces of matter are compelled to mingle with the Divine element. When persuasion fails, the ruler uses force.

The true explanation of the union of mind and necessity would seem, therefore, to be that mind is the great originating, shaping, and formative cause; necessity the secondary cause or causes, the material forces, which mind uses for its purposes.<sup>2</sup>

A very good illustration of the union of mind and necessity, and of the confused notions entertained by some would-be philosophers concerning the part played by each factor is given in the *Phædo*.<sup>3</sup>

"When I was a young man," says Socrates the aged—he is in the prison and is just about to receive the poison-cup—"I was wondrously eager after that kind of wisdom which they call natural science. For it seemed to me truly grand to know the cause of things—how a thing arises, and how it perishes, and how it subsists; and oftentimes I rang the changes high and low in my own mind, speculating on such questions as these: whether it is, when heat and cold have come to corruption, that then, as some say, living creatures arise—or

<sup>1</sup> We need not be surprised to find Plato often speaking of God, impersonally as it were, as mind. It is a favourite expression with him, and may have been adopted, partly as a protest against the popular anthropomorphic notions. He makes use of the terms God (*Theos*), the Creator (*Demiurgus*), mind (supreme reason), the gods (*Zeus*), just as each best suits his immediate purpose.

<sup>2</sup> "All that becomes, or comes into existence," says Steinhardt (*Introd.*, p. 84), "must have a cause, and when Plato places this cause in being—that which has life in itself, he, first of any thinker, gives the true explanation of necessity. The phrase, therefore, that everything is made by mind and necessity is only another way of expressing the necessary connection between being and becoming—cause and effect."

<sup>3</sup> This passage is unique in one respect, viz. that it is probably the only bit of autobiography to be found in Plato. But whether it is the autobiography of Socrates or of Plato himself, is doubtful. The mouth that utters the words is indeed the mouth of Socrates, but the spirit that prompts the words seems to be the spirit of Plato. This self-revelation, as stated above, occurs in the *Phædo*, where the real Socrates has passed into the platonic Socrates.

The reasons for assigning the episode to Plato rather than to Socrates, are (1) that Socrates is nowhere represented as eagerly pursuing natural science. The reverse is the case. Xenophon (*Mem.* i. 6, 14) makes him allude to the treasures left in the books of wise men of old, which he reads with his friends, but these are evidently the poets, for no other wise men does Socrates quote; (2) the episode leads directly up to the doctrine of ideas, which is distinctly Platonic; (3) it is connected with the discussion on immortality, in which the views expressed by Socrates are greatly in advance of those to be found in the Apology. Why Plato should have thus veiled himself under the guise of Socrates is a question which we have already discussed. [The reference is to an unwritten portion of the work.—ED.]

again, whether the element by which we *think* is the blood, or air, or fire, or nothing of the kind, but the brain, which may produce in us the perceptions of hearing and sight and smell, and from these may proceed memory and opinion, and from memory and opinion again when they have attained to fixity, knowledge. And then I went on to think about the destruction of these things, and the changes that take place in heaven and earth, and at last I came to the conclusion that I was utterly unfitted by Nature to undertake such investigations."

Socrates, in short, was fast getting into that condition which he ascribes elsewhere (*Crat.*, 411 B.) to most of the "wise men" of his generation—"they are perpetually going round and round," he says, "and get dizzy, and so they imagine that everything else is going round"—when, in fact, the cause of the whirl is in themselves.

And while he is in this state of mind, he hears some one reading from a work of Anaxagoras, and maintaining that the orderer and cause of all things is, not matter in any shape whatsoever, but mind (*nous*)! Here, at last, is an answer to satisfy an intelligent inquirer. Socrates, as he says, was delighted at having discovered such a cause. It seemed to him the right solution of the question, for, "If this be so, then mind the orderer will dispose of all things, and place each individual thing in such a way as shall be *for the best*." The hope thus awakened in him Socrates says he would not have given up for much; he seized the books with avidity and devoured them. But alas! this "wondrous hope," as he calls it, was doomed to disappointment. Anaxagoras, as we know, did not follow out his grand idea to its legitimate consequences;<sup>1</sup> and as the eager reader went on, he soon perceived that the man made no use of mind, and did not seek the cause of the order of things in it, but in air and ether and water, and many other extraordinary ways. His mode of explaining things seemed to me, Socrates continues, "just like that of a person who should say in general terms that the cause of all that Socrates does is mind, and should then go on and attempt to explain the cause of each particular thing that I do, by saying first, that I sit here now because my body is made of bones and sinews—that the bones, indeed, are firm and divided from one another by joints, but the sinews can be stretched and relaxed, and they surround the bones with the flesh, and the skin keeps all together. And because the bones are raised at their joints, and the sinews relax and contract, therefore I am able to bend my limbs, and this is the reason why I am sitting here now, bent together. And then again he would explain my talking to you by other similar 'causes,' ascribing our conversation to voice and air and hearing, and ten thousand things of the kind, and paying no heed to the *true* cause which is—that because it seemed better to the Athenians to condemn me, therefore it seemed better to me also to sit here, and more righteous to remain and suffer the penalty which they have inflicted. Otherwise, I trow, these sinews and bones would long ago have made off to Megara or Boeotia—by the dog<sup>2</sup> they would, if they had been moved only by *their* notion of what was for the best, and if I," the controlling mind, "had not considered the juster and nobler part—instead of taking to flight and running away—to stay here and undergo the penalty which the state has imposed. But to call such things the 'cause,'" he adds, "is surely very strange. It might be said, indeed, that unless I possessed bones and sinews, and all that is comprised in my body, I could not carry out my purposes—and that would be true. But—to maintain that I do what I

<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, p. 334.

<sup>2</sup> Socrates' favourite mode of asseveration, adopted probably to avoid using the name of any deity.



do by means of these things, and that *this* is the way in which mind acts, and not by *my choice of the best*—that would be a most careless and shiftless way of speaking.” And this is the way, he continues, in which the many argue. They grope about as it were in the dark, trying to touch the cause, but because they do not distinguish between the cause and the condition which it produces, they mistake and call the condition the cause. Just as the supposed philosopher imagined the contracting and relaxing of Socrates’ bones and sinews to be the cause of his sitting still in the prison-house so do the thoughtless many imagine that the earth remains in her place because of her bones and sinews, the natural laws of her existence, according to the theories of the day, the surrounding vortex which steadies her, or the air which acts as a prop. They cannot see that just as a nobly-reasoning mind kept Socrates firm to what was for the best, so the earth and her natural laws, her “bones and sinews” are held together by a noble-reasoning power, which has ordered all for the best—even the good (*to agathon*). They try to find out some physical cause, some giant Atlas, which shall be stronger and more imperishable than that which is immortal and invisible, the good.

The inherent defect of materialism could in no way be better emphasised than in the pithy homely words of Socrates. As has been well observed,<sup>1</sup> “The want in all materialism is this, that it ends with its explanation of phenomena where the highest problems of philosophy begin.”—“Why do I sit here?”—“Because of your bones and sinews.” Does the answer satisfy any one? We trow not, and yet it is an answer still served up in other shapes to thinking people even *now*.

In the *Philebus*, again, one of his most carefully reasoned works, Plato gives a more strictly philosophical explanation. He divides all things into four classes. These in the ascending scale are as follows:—

- (1) The unlimited ;
- (2) The limiting ;
- (3) That which is produced by the mingling of the limiting with the unlimited ;

(4) The cause.

(1) Here the lowest in the scale, the “unlimited” or “the infinite” (*to apeiron*), is, to use Professor Jowett’s words,<sup>2</sup> “the unthinkable, the unknowable, of which nothing can be affirmed; the mixture or chaos which preceded distinct kinds in the creation of the world.”

(2) The next above it, “the limiting” (*to peras*), which mingles with and regulates the unlimited, “is best expressed to us by our word ‘law,’ that which measures all things, and assigns to them their limit, and preserves them in their natural state.”

(3) The third, that which is produced by the limiting law working on the unlimited, as, *e.g.* natural law producing the seasons, the law of music producing harmony, and so on.

(4) The fourth and highest is the cause of all.

The cause we may define in Plato’s own words (*Phil.*, 26 E.) :—

(a) Everything that exists must have come into existence by means of a cause ;

(b) The working-power that brings into existence and the cause are one and the same ;

(c) From its nature the working-power or cause leads, and that which is effected follows, being made by it ;

<sup>1</sup> Lange, *Gesch. d. Mat.* i. 20, quoted by Zeller, *Pre. Soc. Phil.*, ii. p. 265, Note 1.

<sup>2</sup> Jowett, *Introd. to the Philebus*, vol. iv. pp. 527-8.

(d) Therefore, the cause and that which serves it in bringing things into existence are not the same, but different.

(e) Finally, the cause is that which fashions all, the artificer, the demiurgus.

That which the cause uses in bringing things into existence—call it what you will, natural law or the principle of order—is hence the servant or slave of the cause.<sup>1</sup>

Then, what is this cause? “Whether,” says Plato (*Phil.*, 28 D.), “shall we say that all things, and what we call the whole (the universe), are under the guidance of unreason and uncertainty and chance; or shall we say with our fathers that, on the contrary, all is ordered and governed by mind (*nous*) and marvellous wisdom?”

Unhesitatingly, both Plato and his hearers recognise the reign of mind. “MIND is our KING,” he says; “mind is king of heaven and earth” (28 C.). And in order that there may be no doubt as to *what* mind Plato means—that all may know, that he has not in view the impersonal shadowy abstraction of Anaxagoras—he identifies this kingly mind with a personal being—he does not hesitate to use that name with which his hearers are most familiar in connection with the Supreme God, and he says:—

“In Zeus there is the royal soul and the royal mind, for in him is the POWER OF THE CAUSE”<sup>2</sup> (*Phil.*, 30 D.).

Mark the grandeur of the expression: “The *power* of the cause.” There be causes many and laws many, but in God is the power of them all—the creating, originating, energising power. “MIND,” he declares again, “is, as was said of old, the *father of the cause*. . . . MIND rules over all.”

(5) *Space*.—In this new discussion Timæus next introduces a third factor into the work of creation, which he calls “space” and describes as the “nurse and receptacle” of all created things. Here, again, we are disquieted by the statement that “space” is “eternal,” but as we read on we perceive that the word is used in a sense entirely different from that in which it is applied to God. Plato’s three clauses are:—

(1) True being, that which has life in itself, the eternal, apprehended only by thought and reason.

(2) Space, the nurse of created things, necessarily “eternal” as compared to them, but in itself hardly real, and apprehended only by a sort of “spurious reason, as it were in a dream.”

(3) Generation, or things created, apprehended only by the senses.

Just as Plato previously introduced the created gods to avoid a violent transition and form an intermediate intelligence between the Divine mind and the mind of man, so here he would seem to bring in space as an intermediate resting-place between God and things created. Space is “eternal” in the same sense that sun and moon are “gods,” *i.e.* relatively, not absolutely.

**Plato and his Predecessors.**—It will have been seen how completely Plato in the *Timæus* rises above all the narrow one-sided views of his predecessors. He borrows from them, it is true, but what he borrows he uses only as stepping-stones to higher truth. His elements are taken from Empedocles; his description of them reminds us of the atoms of Leucippus and Democritus; his theory of generation and of the universal creature nourishing itself by its own decay is only another form of the Heracleitean doctrine of life passing into death, death into life again; his theories of the importance and influence of numbers belong to the Pythagoreans; his idea of the creative mind was anticipated by Anaxagoras. Nevertheless, the fact remains that until all these

<sup>1</sup> *To douleuon.*

<sup>2</sup> *Tēs aitias dunamis.*



isolated views were combined by Plato, they existed as mere fragments of thought—most of them hurtful and destructive by reason of their one-sidedness, whilst even the *nous* of Anaxagoras was not, as we have seen, so consistently developed as to be helpful. In Plato's hands all become fruitful. Under the rule of mind, the mind of a personal God, each theory—elements, atoms, numbers, generation, and decay—takes its own place, that in which it can thrive and contribute to the whole its quota, whatever element of truth it bears within it. Elements and atoms cannot be dispensed with—they become the material on which mind works; the alternation of decay and generation is an absolute fact—it shows itself as the way in which mind works out its plans in the visible world; number becomes proportion, rhythm that on which the world-order depends, the means by which mind disciplines its mortal children. Over against the whole visible world of sense thus harmoniously organised is set the abiding invisible world of ideas, of which the material world is but a transient copy; whilst the gulf between the world of reality and its shadow, the world of sense, is bridged over by the fact that both have one and the same Ruler—not the shadowy mind of Anaxagoras, but the royal mind, the life-giver, the mind that has, to use Plato's unsurpassable expression, the power of the cause, who is Himself the energising source of all other causes, physical and spiritual. The construction of this noble edifice, a true temple of God, is Plato's great contribution to philosophy.

### III.—GOD IN RELATION TO THE INVISIBLE WORLD

If any one fact has been prominently brought before us in the foregoing passages, it is this—the earnestness of Plato's belief in the existence of God and of an unseen world, of which the visible world is but a copy and a shadow. So intense is this belief to him that he cannot conceive of any thinking man holding any other. Even to those who have not hitherto reflected seriously on the question, age, and the experience of life, he maintains, will bring conviction. In the *Laws* (x. 887 C. *et seq.*), where he gathers up the record of his own life, he says emphatically, that he has never yet known a man who continued in unbelief till old age. And, like all who are really in earnest, Plato felt intensely, even passionately, on the matter. How, he asks, can we help being angry with people who do not believe? And yet, he adds (being such an one as Plato the aged), anger is not the remedy—they must be reasoned with gently (*Laws*, x. 890 D.). We must labour to persuade men<sup>1</sup>—we who have heard the war-cry, must come to the rescue of the greatest of all laws.

The war-cry, indeed, Plato had heard, and in the *Sophist* he throws himself into the thick of the fight. The contest that is going on between the *Materialists*—the people who (as he says in another place, *Theat.*, 155 E.) “believe that nothing exists except what they can seize in their hands”—and the *Idealists*—those who believe in the reality of unseen things—he compares to the old mythological battle between the giants, the sons of earth, and the Olympian gods, the sons of Heaven. “On the one side,” says Socrates-Plato (*Soph.*, 246), “the materialists drag down everything from heaven and the unseen to earth, and literally grasp in their hands rocks and oaks. They lay hold on these and the like, and maintain stoutly that only the things which can be touched and

<sup>1</sup> It is fair to add that if persuasion fails, punishment is to be resorted to. This, however, was not the opinion of Plato in his prime. He would have scouted the notion of belief enforced by the civil power.

handled exist. They define *body* and *being* to be the same, and if any one says that something *is* (exists) without a body, they treat him with scorn, and will hear of nothing but *body*."

"These are terrible fellows," says Theætetes, "I myself have met them often."

"That is the reason," Socrates rejoins, "why their opponents defend themselves cautiously from above, out of the unseen world, and contend with might and main that true being consists of certain intelligent and incorporeal IDEAS. The bodies of the materialists, and what *they* put forward as truth, the idealists break to pieces with their arguments, and call these bodies not true existence, but—what they are in reality—generation and motion," things that are being swept away by the river of Heracleitus, vanishing and perishing. "Between the two camps," adds Socrates, "an endless battle is always going on," and will go on to the end of time.

With the idealists of his own day, however, Plato cannot be in entire accord. Most certainly he sympathises with them in their war with materialism, but he would not be true to his own conception of truth if he did not point out where they also are in error.<sup>1</sup>

His argument against the one-sided views for which both parties are fighting is, as Steinhardt justly remarks, one of the finest to be found in Plato, and one that is helpful to ourselves. Here we can but briefly sketch the outline.

He reminds the materialists that man, the "mortal animal," possesses a soul, and that in the soul there either are or are not such ideas as justice and wisdom. If justice and wisdom can be either absent or present, then undoubtedly they exist.<sup>2</sup> The materialist talks about justice and wisdom much as does the idealist, but he forgets that when he does so, he unconsciously thereby concedes the actual existence of an invisible world which lies beyond the corporeal world—for who ever *saw* justice and wisdom? who ever "squeezed" them in their hands? Even if the materialist follow up his theory so far as to assert that the soul itself is corporeal, and proceed to explain its conceptions as mere corporeal states and conditions—he must, nevertheless, recognise that it possesses one very distinctive quality, that of POWER. "I maintain," he says, "that anything which possesses the power either to work upon others—or to suffer even in the smallest degree from the most trifling cause, and but for a moment, has real existence, for I hold that the definition of Being is nothing else than this, viz. POWER." The materialist thus has this nut to crack, and it is a hard one: how can matter, dead cold matter, suffer? How can it work? how can it energise, either in nature or in man?

Turning then to the imperfect idealists of his own day—those who held True Being (God) existed in perfect isolation as a pure, emotionless, immovable, unchangeable something—those whose conception of Spirit was, therefore, of a something nearly as dead and cold as matter itself—Plato shows that whatever possesses mind must possess life and soul, and life and soul must possess motion. How, without these attributes, could mind exist? "By Heaven!" he exclaims, with all the passion of truth, "shall we let ourselves be so easily persuaded that Perfect Being is destitute of movement, and life, and soul, and mind? that it neither really lives nor thinks?—that it is a something, venerable and holy indeed, but without mind, immovable and motionless?"

<sup>1</sup> The "friends of ideas," referred to in the *Sophist*, are supposed to be the Megarian School of Philosophers (Zeller, *Socrates and the Socratic Schools*, English translation by Reichel, p. 219, Note 3); but the main argument tells equally against the older idealism of Parmenides and the Eleatics.

<sup>2</sup> What Plato means by this curious mode of expression, we shall see immediately.



Nay, for the definition of Being is POWER! And power shows itself in life and motion.

By his conception, then, of power (*dunamis*) as the essential characteristic of spirit, Plato cuts away the ground from beneath abstract idealism on the one hand and materialism on the other, while he recognises a germ of truth latent in both. The secondary causes, the "bones and sinews" of the *Phædo*, undoubtedly exist—the materialist is right in maintaining that natural forces are ever acting upon matter and transforming it into shapes new and varied—but the POWER of the cause, the quickening, energising might, belongs to Spirit only—it is the express prerogative of mind in contradistinction to matter.

In the conception of the idealist also there is a grand and eternal truth—this, namely, that True Being, God, although possessed of life, movement, power, highest reason, creating, energising, all-effecting—is nevertheless, in all His ceaseless energy, absolutely THE SAME, *at rest* in the unchangeableness of His own nature.

Plato, says Steinhardt (*Introd. to the Sophist*, vol. iii. p. 454), saw extremes in both sides—both argued from abstractions, and without right notions of what True Being is. "He shows in materialism itself the germ already latent of a higher and more spiritual view of the world, and then proved to the abstract idealists that their own principles compel them to recognise a perpetual action and reaction of the ideal world and the world of sense, one upon the other (the ideal is not an abstraction up in the clouds untouched by the world of sense). This development is the work of genius, a masterpiece of dialectic, and still instructive for us at the present day."

**God and the Ideas.**—Nothing can better show the intense hold which the unseen world has upon Plato than the fact that he conceived the world of sense—this present world in and about us, which to many (if not most) of us, is the "real" world—as a mere copy of the true unseen realities. In the *Timæus*, as we have seen, the excellence of the visible world and the character of the Maker are made to depend upon its having been fashioned after the eternal pattern (p. 548). Again, in the passage from the *Sophist* just quoted, where Plato affirms justice and wisdom to have a real existence, the reason is, that justice and wisdom in the human soul are only communications or emanations (so to speak) from certain great ideas—justice in itself, wisdom in itself—which have a real, true, independent existence in the eternal world. Everything on earth, visible or invisible, material or spiritual, has its anti-type in heaven—everything which in the language of daily life we call "real," is only the copy of a truly real Divine idea.<sup>1</sup>

This is Plato's great doctrine of the Ideas, that which has gained for him *par excellence* the name of The Idealist. We need not, however, be surprised to learn that, like his physical theories, this doctrine is closely connected with the work of a predecessor. In the Greek intellectual progress, there is no hiatus—development does not proceed by leaps and bounds, but quietly, gently,

<sup>1</sup> So far does Plato carry his theory that (like his master, Socrates) he does not hesitate to borrow his examples from the most homely things. The carpenter, for instance, makes a bed, but the ideal bed, or pattern, is in heaven, and the Maker of it is God, the great Artist (*Rep.* x. 597 B.).

And again in the *Cratylus* (389 A.) he asks: "To what does the carpenter look in making a weaver's shuttle? Does he not look to some sort of natural or ideal shuttle? And suppose the shuttle to be broken, will he make another looking to the broken one, or will he look to the form which he had in his mind when he made the other?"

"To the latter, I should imagine," replies Cratylus.

"And," says Socrates, "might not that be called the true or ideal shuttle?"

"I should say 'Yes' to that," is the response.

link succeeding link—first the blade, then the bud, then the flower, all in the most natural sequence.

It is perfectly easy to see that Plato's doctrine of ideas is the legitimate and logical outcome of Socrates' great endeavour after universal conceptions. We remember how Socrates is always going about putting questions, "puzzling himself and others," striving to get to the very root of the matter—and how he is, apparently, perpetually baffled—the answer cannot be found. Can we imagine a Plato following Socrates for years, listening to this constant questioning, and making no effort to solve the riddle and supply the answer?—Impossible! Doubtless each question was discussed and re-discussed again and again in private. Undoubtedly the reason that Plato's development of the theory is put into Socrates' mouth, is simply his own deep sense of the debt which he owed to the stimulus of his master.

Let us look at some of Socrates' questions, and see how the ideas grew out of them. In the earlier dialogues we have: "What is temperance?" "What is courage?" and so on proposed, but no answer which Socrates can accept as final brought forward. Then, a little later, in the dialogues in which the real Socrates is fast becoming Socrates-Plato, "the double star which we cannot separate"—light begins to break through.

(1) We have the great question in the *Meno*: "What is virtue?" and Meno's fragmentary answer: "There is a virtue peculiar to the man, another to the woman, a third to the ruler, a fourth to the slave—in fact a "whole swarm" of virtues, as Socrates puts it. This is not what he wants: "Give up making many things out of one, as they say of those who break a thing," he says, "and hand me over virtue *whole and sound*" (*Meno*, 77 A.). Health is the same in man and woman—what is that which we call "Virtue," and is the same in all relations of life? *The something of which Socrates is in search must be One and the Same always and in all relations.*

(2) Then, again, in the *Hippias Major*, in the question, "What is Beauty?" different beautiful things are mentioned (289). There is the beauty of a vase, of a lyre, of a horse, of a maiden. Each is beautiful, yet that which constitutes "beauty" in each differs from the beauty of the others—moreover, its beauty is relative only. Heracleitus has said that the most beautiful ape compared to a man is ugly. So, the beauty of a vase compared to that of a maiden is nothing, and what is the beauty of a maiden compared to that of a god? Hippias and Socrates cannot determine what beauty is. The something wanted must be *absolutely, not relatively, beautiful; it must be perfect—Beauty-in-itself!*

(3) Then in the *Euthyphro*, the question, "What is piety?" is discussed. Socrates points out again that the nature of piety in each case must be always one thing. Piety in every action must be always the same. "Tell me," he says, "*what it is that makes piety pious*" (5 D. seq.). *The something wanted must be able to communicate itself.*

It is noteworthy that in the last instance, "Tell me *what it is*"—Plato uses the very word that he afterwards develops into the answer—the words are literally "Tell me the *IDEA*," the form or "species" of that, which makes piety pious.

These three examples (whether given in the right order of time or not) will suffice to show how Plato felt his way to the ideas. The something that Socrates is in search of in each case must be

- (1) A whole—one and the same, unchanging;
- (2) Absolute, not relative—perfect in itself, the standard;
- (3) Able to communicate its own quality to others.



In other words, that which Socrates is in search of is, in each case, *the unchanging essence of the thing*.

All this is implied in the simple definition of the idea given in the *Republic* (vi. 507 B.) :—

(1) We say, observes Socrates, that there are “many” beautiful things, and “many” good things ; and so, to other things which we define (such as virtuous, just, pious things), we apply the term *many*.

(2) But then, again, we say that there is a beauty *in itself* and a good *in itself*, and this we say of all other things which we formerly reckoned as “many”—for they may be classed under ONE IDEA ; which we call the true being or essence (*ousia*) of each (the *thing-in-itself*).

(3) And the many, as we say, are seen, not known ; the ideas are known, not seen.

And being *known*—that is, apprehended by mind, not by the senses—they are eternal (see *ante*, p. 548).

A beautiful passage in the *Cratylus* shows us Plato setting the eternal crown on the ideas. Previously in the dialogue he has been alluding to the perpetual flux of Heracleitus—the river of time that is continually flowing on and bearing all earthly things away in its course—and he says (439 C.) : “There is a matter about which I often dream—whether we may say that there is an absolute beauty and an absolute good, and any other absolute in existence—or not ?”

“It seems to me that there is,” Cratylus rejoins.

“Then,” says Plato, “let us search into that beauty itself—not inquiring as to whether a face be fair or anything of that sort, or whether all these things seem to be in a state of flux. Don’t waste time on these. But—shall we not maintain that beauty itself, the true beauty, always *is that which it is*, i.e. is eternal and unchanging.<sup>1</sup> This alone is worth inquiring into.”

What, then, are those mysterious ideas, each an essence, “intangible, colourless, incorporeal”—absolutely perfect in itself ?

As set forth in the *Phædo* (78 and 100 C.) : (a) They are self-existent and unchanging.

(b) They are a kind of stepping-stone on which the soul mounts to the very highest knowledge of all.

(c) They are that without which their human namesakes are worthless. Anything beautiful is only beautiful in so far as it partakes of the absolute beauty. The absolute beauty is the cause of all other beauty.

(d) As set forth in the *Phædrus* (247 E.), they form the heavenly banquet, on which the gods and pure souls are nourished—absolute righteousness, wisdom, and knowledge.

(e) As set forth in the *Sophist* (246, *et seq.*), they are spiritual forces, endowed with life and the sign of life—power.

In a word, righteousness absolute, justice absolute, truth, knowledge, beauty-in-itself—each and all are, simply, the THOUGHTS of GOD.

Herein lies the supreme importance of the doctrine of ideas. If all things, as Heracleitus maintains, are perpetually flowing on, and nothing remains steadfast, there could be no knowledge and no one to know. But, if knowledge, and beauty, and justice have an objective independent existence, then we may be of good cheer ! The ideas represent the unchanging eternal forces over which the river of time has no power ; they lie beyond it, and on them, therefore, the true progress of humanity depends.

The ideas, then, are the thoughts of God, but they are not God Himself.

<sup>1</sup> “I Am that I Am.”

GOD, as Plato would say, is higher still. He is that round which all the ideas centre, that from which they emanate as light from the sun—the IDEA of the Good.

GOD = *the idea of the good*.—In many ways Plato associated the idea of the good with the supreme mind of the universe and with all that is supremely excellent in human thought. The world is in its present position, and remains there, like Socrates in the prison, because it was placed there by the good (p. 559). The universe has been called into existence by the Creator, because He is good (p. 548). And as stated above, the good is no one single quality, but the union of all perfection. Plato puts this in a singularly Greek way when he says in the *Philebus* (65) that, when we are pursuing the good, if we cannot take it with one idea, we may with *three—beauty, symmetry, truth*.<sup>1</sup> In a previous part of the same dialogue he has defined the good as that which is “perfect and self-sufficing,” and as corresponding, therefore, only “to the true mind, which is also the Divine” (*Phil.*, 20 D., 22 C.).

Finally, we may take as the sum and substance of all Plato’s thoughts and meditations on the good that most beautiful illustration of it which he gives in the *Republic* (vi. 504 B. *seq.*). After a long discussion about justice and temperance and all the other virtues required in the guardian or ruler of his ideal state, he suddenly strikes a higher note, and tells his hearers with very great earnestness that there is a something beyond all these noble qualities, a something higher still, a knowledge the greatest and most necessary to them of all—to be attained, moreover, only by the most strenuous effort.

“What!” says Adeimantus (one of the personæ in the dialogue) in amazement: “Is there anything greater than justice and the other virtues that we have been talking about?”

“There is,” Socrates rejoins, “a greater. Through it, justice and the other virtues become useful and profitable; without it, no other knowledge or possession can benefit us in the least. This greatest of all, this highest of all—concerning which we ourselves know so little—is the IDEA OF THE GOOD. Do you suppose,” he says, “that the possession of all other things, without the good, can be a gain? or that all other knowledge is of any avail without the knowledge of beauty and goodness?”

“Small as is our knowledge of the good, it is the one thing worth seeking after—the one thing that irradiates all else. What it is in itself, Socrates cannot tell (506 E.), but he will try to express his notions concerning it by means of an illustration borrowed from that which is likeliest to it in the world of sense—the child of the good, the sun.

“The sun it is which makes all visible things to be visible—without him they would be in darkness. The power of sight may be in the eye, and the owner desirous to use it; colours also may be there, but unless a third nature, specially adapted to the purpose, come to the rescue, sight will see nothing, and colours will be invisible. This third nature is light, the noble bond of union between the eye of the beholder and the things beheld.

“And the giver of the light and of the power of sight—he from whom it flows as a sort of effluence from his own fulness—is the child of the good, whom the Good begat in His own likeness to be in the visible world in relation to the sight and the things of sight what He Himself is in the world of thought, in relation to mind and the things of mind. . . . That which gives truth to what is known and power to the knower is the idea of the good, the author of knowledge and of truth; and beautiful as are these two, knowledge

<sup>1</sup> Symmetry to a Greek is measure, proportion, order—hence it becomes an essential attribute of that which brings order out of chaos, the creative mind.



and truth, if we think of the good as more beautiful still, we shall think rightly. And," adds Socrates, "just as in our illustration we said that light and sight were truly said to be like the sun, and yet not the sun, so now we say truly that knowledge and truth are like the good, and yet not the good—the nature of the good has a place of higher honour still.

"For just as the sun not only gives visibility to the things that are seen, but brings them into existence, gives them growth and nourishment—so in like manner, we say that not only is knowledge given to the things that are known by the good, but their being and essence, although the Good Himself is not essence, but far transcends essence in dignity and power" (509 B.).

This, the very sun and centre of the world of mind, the idea of the good, is seen last by those even who earnestly pursue it, and only with toil and trouble; but when seen, we must conclude that it is the universal cause of all that is right and beautiful, bringing forth light and the lord of light to rule the visible world, but itself ruling in the world of thought, and being therein the source of truth and reason. "And to this," Plato concludes, "even to the idea of the good, must he look who would act with true understanding either in private or in public" (517 B.).

Who can read these words without thinking of that Sun of Righteousness of which they are an unconscious prophecy; of Him who said: "I am the Light of the World. He that believeth in Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life"?

## PLATO'S IDEA OF MAN—HIS PSYCHOLOGY

In order to enter with any degree of fulness into Plato's thoughts, it is necessary to know something of his psychology—his conceptions of the nature of man as well as of God, and we cannot in brief space gain a clearer view of these conceptions than by turning once more to the *Timæus*, and taking up the thread of the narrative where we left off.

**The Creation of Man.**—The reader will recollect the concluding instructions of the Creator to the gods whom He has created and now entrusts with the task of fashioning the four great races. The Creator wills that mortal races should inhabit the earth, but were He to create these, they would not be mortal. His life-giving hand can only form that which is (relatively) eternal. Therefore the forming of the mortal part of man must be delegated to the inferior powers, but God Himself will form the eternal and immortal part. "That part of them which is fittingly called 'immortal'—the DIVINE—the part which shall be a leader and guide to such of them as are willing always to follow justice and the gods—the seed and beginning of this, I myself will give you; but the rest, do ye. Around the immortal weave mortality; form and fashion living creatures, provide food for them; let them increase, and receive them again in death."

Thus He spake, and again poured the remains of the elements into the cup in which He had previously mingled the world-soul, and mixed them somewhat in the same manner—no longer, however, pure as before, but diluted to the second and third degree. And when He had framed the whole, He divided the souls in numbers equal to the stars, assigning a soul to each star, and having placed them in a chariot, He showed them the nature of the universe, and declared to them the unalterable laws decreed for them (*Tim.*, 41 E. *et seq.*).

The Ten Laws:<sup>1</sup> (1) "That the first birth of all should be one and the same, in order that no one might suffer at His hands.

(2) "That from their distribution among the measures of time (the stars), to which they were severally adapted, there must proceed the most God-fearing of living creatures.

(3) "That as human nature is twofold, the superior race should be the one hereafter to be called man.

(4) "And because souls must of necessity be planted in bodies, and objects are always approaching and receding from these bodies, it was necessary first that there should be inborn in all one and the same perception of external force.

(5) "And it was necessary, secondly, that they should have love, which is a mixture of pleasure and pain, and also fear and anger, and the feelings which are akin or opposed to these.

(6) "Those who should get the better of these (the feelings implanted in them of necessity) should live righteously, and those who were mastered by them, unrighteously.

(7) "He who has lived well during his appointed time shall return to the habitation of his companion-star, and lead a blessed and kindred life.

(8) "But he who has failed shall pass in his second birth into the nature of a woman.

(9) "And if he does not cease from evil in this second probation, he shall pass perpetually into the likeness of some brute, of nature corresponding to his own evil disposition.

(10) "And the troubles resulting from these transformations shall not end, until, obeying that part within him which is always the same (the Divine and Immortal part), and having subdued by the help of reason that part of him which was added afterwards—the tumultuous, turbulent, unreasoning part, composed of fire and water and air and earth (the mortal part)—he shall regain the form of the first and best state.

"And when He had established all these laws for His creatures—that He might be guiltless of future evil in any one of them—He sowed some in the earth, and some in the moon, and some in the other measures of time (the stars), and, the sowing ended, He left it to the younger gods both to mould the mortal bodies, and to supply all that was still lacking to the human soul, and when they had fashioned this and all pertaining to it to rule over them, and, as far as they were able, to pilot the mortal creature in the fairest and best way, that He Himself might not become a cause of evil to Himself.

"And when the Creator had so ordered all things, He left the carrying out of His injunctions to His children, and He Himself remained in His own place."

Harsh and even repulsive in some respects as these "laws" appear to us, they are of exceeding interest as exponents of Plato's ideas, and therefore we must, as before, gather up the leading thoughts. They afford a clue to much.

**Chief Points.**—(1) *The Attitude of the Creator to His Creatures.*—Note that—

(a) He gives the laws in order that He Himself may "*be guiltless of future evil in any one of them.*"

(b) The first birth of all is to be one and the same—*i.e. all are to have an equal chance at starting*—"in order that none may suffer at His hands."

<sup>1</sup> Lest any should suppose that we have here an echo of the Ten Commandments given to the Hebrews, it is necessary to state that the Laws are nowhere called the Ten Laws or enumerated separately. We have placed them as above for the sake of clearness.



(c) He Himself fashions the immortal part.

(d) And this for the express purpose of being a guide to the mortal creature.

(e) The life on earth He intends as a *probation*.

(f) The destiny of the mortal creature who is willing to be guided by his immortal part, is nothing less than that he in the end shall become Divine. This is implied in the phrase that his immortal part shall return to the star in which it was sown, "and lead a blessed and kindred life," for the stars, as we remember, are Divine in Plato's eyes.<sup>1</sup>

The foregoing considerations are sufficient to show that Plato is very far indeed from implying that the supreme God paid no heed to His mortal children, and took no interest in them. On the contrary, before retiring to His own place, He hedges them round about, as it were, with every care and precaution. Short of creating them entirely Himself—which, according to Plato, He cannot do if they are to be *mortal*—God has done His utmost for mortals—He has given them a Divine element to guide them, and He destines every one of them for a blessed and Divine immortality. God works here as everywhere in Plato as the *Good*.

2. *The Dual Nature of Man*.—Note, secondly, the twofold nature of man :—

(a) First, he is provided with an immortal part, the God-given reason ;

(b) But, secondly, being mortal, he must of necessity have a body, and that body of necessity is exposed to contact with external forces and to attacks from without—objects are always approaching or receding from it. From this follows of necessity two requirements :—

(a) Man must be able to recognise these external forces—he must of necessity have perception and the aid of the senses ;

(β) And in order that he may be either attracted to these external objects or quick to avoid and reject them, he must—also of necessity—have implanted within him the emotions—love to draw him to external objects, fear to make him avoid them, anger to repulse them energetically, together with "all the feelings which are akin or opposed to these."

Man's dual nature is, therefore, equally with that of the universe, produced by reason and necessity—God and natural law.

3. *Man's Probation—in what it consists*.—It is evident, of course, that from his twofold nature arise the conditions of his probation. Man's trial is, that by the help of his true self, by obeying the God-given reason, he shall overcome the part that was *added afterwards*—the tumultuous unreasoning part composed of earth and the other elements, that part which, as we shall presently see, includes the emotions and desires. Herein consists the great *agōn*, the life-and-death struggle of every human being, even in the contest between the immortal and the mortal parts of his nature.

4. *The Length of the Probation*.—Note also that man's time of trial is not, in Plato's eyes, the little span of threescore years and ten which we call "life." It is many such spans, many lives, a tremendous cycle of time (in the *Phædrus* said to be three thousand years in some cases, ten thousand years in others) during which the soul passes successively into and "wears out" many mortal bodies. All this is connected with the doctrine of

<sup>1</sup> The idea of divinity is also, perhaps, implied in the allegorical expression, "He placed the souls as in a chariot"—an allusion to the Divine beings of the ancient mythology, Apollo, Selene, Eos, who appear in chariots. With these Divine beings the soul that conquers shall be on an equality. We have already explained the reason why Plato clung to mythical forms—they were readily understood by his hearers.

metempsychosis or transmigration of souls, which will engage our attention later on.

5. *Plato's Conception of Women.*—Note, again, the attitude of the philosopher towards women. "Human nature," he says, "is twofold, and the superior is that which is to be called man." All men are to have an equal chance at starting, but women do not share that chance. They appear only in the third remove from the Divine. If a man has failed in his first life—literally, if he has been "tripped up" in wrestling with his lower nature—he passes in his second earthly life into the nature of a woman. Mark the expression, "the nature of a woman," a nature different, that is, from the nature of man. If he fails in his second probation, he passes into the likeness of some brute. Shade of Andromache, of Arêtê, of Antigone, of Telesilla, of Sappho! what think ye of this? Was ever description penned more insulting to woman than this of our "divine philosopher"?—"Woman occupies the station intermediate between man and the brute." Were the sentiment not borne out by passages in the *Republic* and the *Laws*, we might hesitate to ascribe it to Plato. Let it remain, a standing witness to the insight of philosophy. We commend it to all who in our own day would ignore the true champion and advocate of woman: "Ye that desire to be under philosophy, do ye not hear philosophy?" Hear it, mark it, "Woman is intermediate between man and the brute," and stand fast in the liberty wherewith CHRIST hath made you free.

As to the rest, women may console themselves that Plato's insight is not infallible. He has unconsciously done the sex a great honour, for he places them on the same level as the poets. Homer, Æschylus, Sophocles, Pindar—all that noble band who worked equally with our philosopher himself in the elevation of mankind—are equally with women, Divine only in the third degree! We smile, and pass on to a subject in which Plato is more himself.

6. *The object of Man's Creation.*—"That from their distribution among the measures of time" (the stars) to which they were severally adapted, "there might proceed the most God-fearing of living creatures." The association of a God-fearing nature with a companion star, strikes us at first as peculiar, not to say superstitious. It is, however, simply the Pythagorean-Platonic way of expressing man's participation in the great world-harmony. As the heavenly bodies praise God by their beauty and the order and regularity of their courses, so man, in his little way, is adapted to the same end—he is to be the most God-fearing of living creatures. Man, to Plato, is always the mikro-kosmos, the little world that is intended to reproduce in himself the harmony of the makro-kosmos, the great world-order.

To resume now the thread of the narrative.

**Creation of the Mortal part of Man** (*Tim.*, 42 E. *et seq.*).—But when His children understood their Father's command, they obeyed it; and, receiving the undying principle of the dying creature, they united to it—in imitation of their own Creator—small portions of fire and water and air and earth, which they borrowed from the universe, to be repaid again. Taking these, they welded them together—not with the indissoluble bands by which they were themselves held—but with numerous pegs invisible by reason of their smallness, and formed out of all a body subject to influx and efflux (*i.e.* to change), and bound the courses of the immortal soul in this body.

**The encasing of the Immortal Principle within the Head** (*Tim.*, 44 D. *et seq.*).—Now when the gods made the mortal nature of man, they enclosed his immortal part—in imitation of the great sphere of the universe—



within a spherical case—"that which we now call the head; and to this the gods linked the whole body, and gave it to minister to the head," and attached to it four members—the hands as useful servants to lay hold of things, the limbs as means of locomotion, to "bear on high the dwelling-place of the most divine and most sacred part within us."

**Formation of the Mortal Soul** (*Tim.*, 69 C. *et seq.*).—Thus the offspring of the Creator, when they had received from Him the immortal principle of the soul, fashioned around it the body, and gave the whole body to be a vehicle for the soul. And they constructed within it *another soul of a different nature*—the mortal, which is subject to terrible and unavoidable affections: first pleasure, greatest bait of evil; then pain, shirker of the good; and rashness and fear, foolish counsellors; and anger, hard to pacify and misleading hope. These, after they had mingled them with unreasoning perception (that of the senses) and all-venturing love, they added—compelled by necessity—to the mortal part of man.

And fearing thereby to pollute the Divine more than was absolutely necessary, they assigned to the mortal soul another habitation in a different part of the body, placing the neck between them as an isthmus and boundary-line, to separate the head from the breast, that they might be kept apart. And in the breast, and what we call the breastplate or thorax, they bound the mortal soul; and since this by nature consists of a superior and an inferior part, they further separated the hollow of the thorax into two divisions, as in a house the women's apartments are separate from the men's, and placed the diaphragm as a partition-wall between them.

**The Superior Part of the Mortal Soul** (*Tim.*, 70).—That part of the soul which partakes of manliness and courage and loves strife, they lodged nearer to the head, between the diaphragm and the neck, that, being subject to reason, it might jointly with her forcibly restrain the desires, whensoever they were not willing of their own accord to obey reason and the command issued from the citadel (the Acropolis—head).

**The Inferior Part** (*Tim.*, 70 D.).—But that part of the soul which desires meat and drink and whatsoever is required by the nature of the body, they placed below the diaphragm, and devised that there should be throughout the whole of this region a sort of manger for the food of the body. And here they bound the desires, like a wild animal which is chained up with man, and must of necessity be nourished, if the race of mortals is to exist. In order, then, that this lower creature might be always feeding at the manger, and lodged as far as possible from the councillor, making as little disturbance and noise as possible—that the best part of the soul (the Divine part dwelling in the head)—might thus be able to deliberate in peace for the good of the whole, they assigned him this place.

**Chief Points.**—(1) *The relation between soul and body.*—The body is given absolutely and unreservedly to be the servant and vehicle of the soul. This requires no comment. Here, as in the case of the universe, the soul is prior to the body, therefore older and more excellent than the body, and designed to be its ruler and mistress.

(2) *The tripartite nature of the soul.*—The soul consists of three distinct parts:—

(a) The Immortal and Divine part, lodged within the head;

(b) The superior part of the mortal soul, the spirited part—manliness, courage, and the nobler passions—kept separate from the immortal part by the isthmus or boundary-line of the neck, and lodged within the body above the diaphragm;

(c) The inferior part of the mortal soul, the desires and appetites, lodged also in the body, but beneath the superior part.

(3) *Function of the reason.*—This, as very beautifully set forth by Plato later in the *Timæus* (90 *et seq.*), is nothing less than that of being a Divine guardian to raise us to our true home and kindred in heaven: "Concerning the noblest part of the soul," he says, "we must consider this, that God gave to be a guardian-genius to each one of us that which, as we say, has its abode at the summit of the body—to raise us, *like a plant not of earthly but of heavenly growth*, from earth to our kindred which is in heaven. And this we say most truly, for the Divinity suspended our head and root from that place whence it first took birth, and thus set the whole body upright" (*i.e.* gave it a heavenward direction)—the end and aim which, as we recollect, Plato discovered also in the very name *anthropos* = man.

The function, moreover, of the reason dwelling at the summit of the body is analogous to that of the ruler dwelling in the acropolis of the city, or to that of the counsellors in Plato's ideal state. It is hers to deliberate for the well-being of the whole, to counsel, to command.

(4) *Function of the spirited part.*—The manly, courageous part of the soul, that which is lodged nearest to the acropolis, has a rôle corresponding to that of the auxiliaries in the ideal state, the military class, whose business it is to defend the whole and carry out the commands of the counsellors. Courage and a noble indignation are given to man to be the ally of his reason.

(5) *Function of the desires and appetitive part.*—These also are necessary, for without them neither the individual mortal life nor the continuance of the mortal race could be maintained. But, necessary as they are, they must be kept chained up—the desires are "as a wild animal, bound up of necessity with man"; and they must be kept quiet, must not be allowed to make disturbance or clamour, or how shall the best part of the soul be able to deliberate in peace for the good of the whole?

(6) *The result of the contest between the mortal and the immortal parts of man.*—Note that the result of this perpetual wrestling is gradual, not sudden. The man, by slow and imperceptible degrees, becomes dominated either by his mortal or his immortal part, according as he occupies himself with the things of time or of eternity. "In the man," says Plato (*Tim.*, 90), "who has busied himself with cravings and ambitions, and striven eagerly to gratify these, all the opinions which arise must of necessity be mortal (*i.e.* concerned with things transient and temporary); and inasmuch as he has allowed his mortal part thus to grow and increase, he will become wholly and entirely mortal in so far as this is possible for man. But, on the other hand, he who has striven earnestly in the love of knowledge and the things of truth, and has trained himself<sup>1</sup> to consider these as the immortal and Divine parts of his nature, if he have laid hold on truth must of necessity—in so far as human nature is capable of sharing in immortality—be wholly immortal, and inasmuch as he is ever serving the divine power, and entertaining in fairest order the guardian genius dwelling within him, he must be pre-eminently happy."

Having now some understanding of Plato's conception of the constitution of man, as composed of body and threefold soul, we may turn to another presentation of the same idea conveyed in an earlier and very beautiful myth, that of the *Soul and her Wings*, or the *Charioteer and his Steeds*, in the *Phædrus* (246 *et seq.*). And here we ought to make the same apology as

<sup>1</sup> *Gegymnasmenō*, exercised himself. The metaphor is taken from the gymnastic exercises of the wrestlers and other athletes, and implies that this perception of the divine can only be attained by effort after a struggle with the lower nature.



Timæus for having inadvertently spoken first of that which is last, since the myth in the *Phædrus* deals with the soul *before* her earthly birth, when she is yet free and in that heavenly place whence, as Timæus tells us, she sprang, even with her kindred, the gods.

## THE SOUL AND HER WINGS

**The Soul as a Composite Force.**—To speak truly of the soul, Plato says, would require a long and more than mortal discourse, and therefore we must be content to describe her by a comparison, or simile. "Let us, then, liken the soul to a composite force—a pair of winged steeds and a charioteer. Now," he bids us note, "the steeds and the charioteers of the gods are both good in themselves and proceed from the good, but those of others (of mortals) are mixed. And mark first," he says, "that the human charioteer drives a pair of steeds; and next, that one of his steeds is noble and good and of noble descent, while the other is the very opposite and of ignoble descent. The guiding of the steeds is, therefore, with us mortals of necessity difficult and troublesome."

Under the image of the composite force we have, of course, the soul in its threefold nature—the charioteer, reason; the noble steed, the spirited part, courage and manliness, the ally of reason; the ignoble steed, the turbulent part, the desires and appetites which render the guiding of the whole so difficult.

The mortal living creature is a soul which has lost its wings. Plato then goes on to explain what he means by the terms "living creature" and "mortal or immortal."

The soul, as a whole, he says, cares for all that is without soul (all inanimate things) and traverses the whole heaven in diverse forms. When the soul is perfect and furnished with wings, she soars on high and orders the whole world; but a soul that has lost her wings is borne along until she lays hold of something solid, wherein she takes up her abode, and receives an earthly body. The body, indeed, appears to move of itself, but this is through the power of the (indwelling) soul, and the whole—soul and body thus united—is called a "living creature," and "mortal."

The "immortal," Plato says, "we call thus not from any one definite reason; but—although we have neither seen nor sufficiently known the nature of God—we can imagine an undying, living being possessed of a body as well as a soul; united together for all time."

By the immortals who possess "body," we may (following Timæus) understand those afterwards referred to under the popular names of Zeus, Apollo, Hestia, &c., *i.e.* the created gods, as distinct from God Himself, true being, who cannot possibly be conceived of materially as united to "body." Plato himself hastens to say—"Let this—the notion of body—be as it pleases God, and so let it be spoken of."

**How the Soul loses her Wings.**—Now, he says, let us try to understand the reason why the soul loses her wings. It is as follows: The wing has by nature the power to bear upwards that which tends to sink downwards, and to soar to the heights where dwell the gods; and it, most of all that relates to the body, is partaker of the divine. Now the divine is beauty, and wisdom, and goodness, and the like, and by these especially the wing of the soul is nourished and grows; but by what is hateful, and evil, and opposed to the good, it dwindles and falls away.

**How the Soul is nourished when with her kindred, the Gods.**—Now, Zeus is the mighty leader in heaven, and he, holding the reins of his winged chariot, first issues forth, ordering and caring for all; and the host of gods and demigods (daimons), marshalled in eleven bands, follows him. Hestia alone remains in the house of the gods, but of the others, those who are reckoned in the number of the ruling twelve, are the leaders, each in his appointed order. Blessed are the sights which they see in the inner heaven, and many are the ways on which the happy gods go to and fro, each doing his own work; and ever he who will and can may follow them; for jealousy hath no place in the heavenly choir.

**The Heavenly Feast and the Way thereto.**—But when they go to the banquet and the feast, they travel up the steep towards the highest arch of heaven. The chariots of the gods, in equal poise and obedient to the rein, do this easily, but the others with difficulty. For the steed of evil presses heavily, inclining the balance and weighing the charioteer down to the earth, if the steed has not been properly trained; hence labour and the uttermost conflict are set before the soul. But those that are called “immortals,” when they have reached the summit, go forth and make a halt upon the ridge of heaven, and so the revolution of the spheres carries them round with it, and they behold the things that lie beyond. But of the heaven above the heaven, no poet on earth has sung, or ever will sing, worthily. Nevertheless, it is on this wise—for we must be bold to say what is true—above all, when what is said concerns the truth. For this is the realm of true being, with which knowledge is concerned—the colourless, formless, intangible essence, to be seen only by mind, the pilot of the soul.

Following the *Timæus*, we may assume this to be the abode of the Supreme God, or, as we should say, His immediate Presence. When He had finished His creative work, Plato tells us that, “He remained in His own place,” the realm of true being, where are the true existences, wisdom, truth, beauty, knowledge, the Divine thoughts or attributes, those things “which eye hath not seen nor ear heard,” for they are apprehended by mind alone.

“Seeing then,” he continues, “that the thoughts of God, and of every soul capable of receiving the food proper to it, is nourished by mind and pure knowledge<sup>1</sup>—the soul from time to time perceives true being and rejoices, and beholding the truth, is nourished and made glad, until the revolution of the world brings it round to the same place again. In the revolution the soul beholds righteousness in itself, she beholds wisdom and knowledge—not that which is attached to generation or relation, that which we call ‘being,’ but knowledge absolute in existence absolute. And after the soul has beheld the other true existences, and feasted upon them in like manner, she sinks again into the inner heaven and returns home; and then the charioteer, putting up his steeds at the crib, gives them ambrosia to eat and nectar to drink. Such is the life of the gods.”

**The Struggle of the Mortal Souls.**—“But as to the other souls, that which follows God best and is likest to Him, raises the head of the charioteer into the outer realm, and is borne round in the revolution, although troubled by the horses, and with difficulty beholding true being; whilst another soul now rises, now sinks—sees some things, indeed, but, by reason of the violence of the steeds—fails to see the rest. Other souls follow; all, indeed, strive to reach the summit, but, not being strong enough, they remain below and are carried round in the revolution, trampling and falling upon one another, each endeavouring to be first, and there is uproar and perspiration, and the ex-

<sup>1</sup> As Aristotle says, God, because He can contemplate nothing higher, contemplates Himself.



tremity of conflict, and here many are lamed through the fault of the charioteer, and many a wing is broken; but all, after much fruitless toil, go away without having attained to the vision of true being, and feed themselves upon opinion."

Mere "opinion," to Plato, is always opposed to truth and knowledge. It is that which repeats what it hears, without trying to penetrate into the cause. Hence, in the *Meno*, it is "not bound by the tie of the cause," and easily escapes. Here, a man feeds himself with opinion, because he has not had courage or resolution enough to reach the heavenly realities.

### Why Souls Desire so Earnestly to Reach the Plain of Truth.—

But the reason of this great eagerness to behold the plain of truth is, that in the meadows there, is found pasturage suited to the highest part of the soul—the natural power of the wing, by which the soul soars, is nourished thereby. And there is a law of Adrasteia, that the soul which, in following God, has attained to see something of the truth, is unharmed until the next revolution, and if it is continually able to accomplish this, it remains always unhurt (innocent). But when a soul is unable to follow, and has not seen the truth, and by some mishap sinks beneath the load of forgetfulness and evil, and having sunk, loses her wing and falls upon the earth—then the law is that in the first birth she shall not pass into the nature of any animal, but into that of man.

This law of Adrasteia (another name for Nemesis) is, like the ten laws of the *Timæus*, a necessary condition of man's nature. Only the soul that has caught a glimpse of true being, of the true life of God, that is, can become a man—i.e. assume the human form divine, that heavenward-directed form at whose summit she dwells, with her gaze turned towards the place whence she sprang. A soul that fails to obtain even this momentary glimpse is not fit to pass into the form of man, and, it may be inferred, sinks at once into the body of some animal.

The earthly destiny corresponds with the degree of truth beheld. Now the soul that has seen most of truth shall be born as a lover of wisdom (*philosophos*), or of beauty (*philokalos*), or as one beloved by the Muses, and himself inspired by love; the soul that has seen truth in the second degree, as a law-abiding, or warlike and truly royal king; the soul of third rank shall be a statesman, or economist, or man of affairs; of the fourth, a lover of gymnastic toil, or a physician of the body; for a soul of the fifth class is destined the life of a seer, or one initiated into the mysteries; for one of the sixth, that of a poet, or a follower of one of the other imitative arts; the soul of the seventh class shall be an artisan, or a husbandman; of the eighth, a sophist, or flatterer of the people; of the ninth, a tyrant.

Note the gradation here; curious as it is, there is in it at least one far-reaching thought. In the first rank are grouped together three classes of lovers—lovers of wisdom, of beauty, and those who, themselves the objects of a divine love, love in turn, and seek to raise their beloved to their own sphere. For this is Plato's idea of love, a conception different *in toto* from the degrading thing that passed among his countrymen under the same name. With him love is the action and reaction of soul upon soul, an inspiration which elevates a man in the highest part of his nature, enables him to regain his wings, and to soar above the things of earth. As we shall see, it is the class of lovers only whose wings grow so that they can soar before the earthly probation is ended. Have we not here a beautiful anticipation of a great truth?

As to the rest, note the position of the seer and of the poet—they come fifth

and sixth respectively. Note, finally, the position of woman—here, as in the *Timæus*, in the first birth—nowhere.

**The Probation—The Growing of the Wings.**—In all these conditions, he who has lived righteously becomes partaker of a better lot; but he who has lived unrighteously, of a worse. To the place whence she set out no soul may return under ten thousand years, for she does not grow her wings in less time—except in the case of the philosopher who has sought wisdom guilelessly, or of the lover who is not without philosophy—these, in the third recurring period of a thousand years, if they have chosen the same life three times in succession, receive thereby their wings, and depart at the end of the three thousand years.

**The Judgment on the Souls.**—But the other souls, when they have completed their first life, receive judgment; and, when judgment is given, some go to suffer punishment in the houses of correction beneath the earth, while others are raised by the award to some place in heaven, where they live in a manner worthy of the life which they led here when in the form of men. At the end of the first thousand years, both good and bad return to draw lots and choose their second life, and every soul takes the life that pleases her. A human soul may pass to the life of a brute, and from a brute that which was once man may return again into man. But a soul that has never seen truth cannot pass into that form—*i.e.* the human form divine. For a man must have intelligence, and be able to proceed by reasoning from the many things perceived by sense to one conclusion—the absolute truth, or universal conception.

No brute of any species whatsoever can do this. Man alone has power to pierce the things perceived by sense, and grasp with his God-given reason the invisible realities, the ideas, the true essence of things—absolute justice, absolute righteousness, truth-in-itself, beauty-in-itself—all that centres in God, the idea of the good. This is the prerogative of man, *quâ* man. But in Plato's view what makes man man is, that the soul shall behold these things before the earthly birth. What we call "power to know truth," Plato calls the "remembrance of things already known." All this is summed up in his great doctrine of recollection.

**Knowledge and Aspiration after God are Recollection.**—"This is the recollection of those things which our soul once saw, when she walked with God, and, despising what we now call 'existence,' lifted up her head towards the true existence (even God). Wherefore the mind of the philosopher alone is winged, and justly so, for according to his ability he is ever clinging in recollection to those things in which God abides, and by which He is what He is—Divine. And the man who makes a right use of such memories is ever being initiated into perfect mysteries, and he alone becomes truly perfect. And because he stands apart from human interests and is absorbed in the Divine, the many rebuke him as one beside himself, but this the many do not see—that he is *enthousiazon*—that God is within him.

"For, as has been said, every soul of man has, by its nature, seen true being, otherwise it could not have passed into the form of man. But to recollect the things of the other world is not easy for all souls—neither for those who beheld them for a brief space only, nor for those who, after falling to earth, have been unfortunate, and through some evil influence have turned to unrighteousness and forgotten the holy things which once they saw."

**Human Goodness only an image of the Divine.**—Few indeed are left to whom the memory of these things is adequately present; and they,



when they see here an image of the other world, are amazed and enwrap; but they do not know what this rapture means, because they do not sufficiently perceive. Now in the earthly images (*homoiomata*) of righteousness and temperance and whatever else is precious to souls, there is no light, but as through a glass darkly<sup>1</sup> and with difficulty, a few following these images (*eikonas*), behold the realities of which they are the copies. Clear-shining was the beauty which once they saw when they followed with the happy choir—we (philosophers) in the company of Zeus, others attending on some other of the gods—and gazed upon the beatific vision, and were made perfect in that mystery which it is meet and right to call most blessed, and which we celebrated in our state of innocence—before we had experience of the evils that awaited us in time to come—and being initiated, we were admitted to behold apparitions perfect and simple and calm and happy, shining in pure radiance—ourselves pure and not yet entombed in that which now we bear about with us and call the body, and within which, as an oyster in his shell, we are imprisoned.

There is little need of further comment on this deep and most pregnant "myth." It will well repay any trouble which we may bestow upon the effort to fathom its meaning for ourselves. There are more things in it than Plato dreamt of—the great truth that love alone, Divine and human, enables the soul to regain its wings; the doctrine that the power to grasp the eternal verities is that which makes man man and distinguishes him from the brutes; the plain of truth, in which alone the wing of the soul is nourished; the heavenly banquet wherein it feeds on righteousness; the beatific vision of God Himself; the calm, sweet, blissful surroundings of the soul in its state of innocence, when feeding upon God; the fall—the stress and storm and agony of the sinking soul—all these are simply anticipations of truths to be revealed—a stretching forth of the soul in which Plato truly touches God.

#### IV.—PLATO'S CONCEPTION OF SIN—REBELLION—THE EFFECTS OF UNRIGHTEOUSNESS—THE REMEDIES FOR SIN

From what we already know of Plato it is clear that he was keenly alive to the existence of evil in the world. Next to his meditations on God, reflections on the nature and cause of evil and the remedy for it must have occupied his thoughts. That evil, moral and physical, can be traced back to God, is a supposition which, as we know, he rejects as an utter impossibility—God is good and the Author of good only. He has done all that can be done for *mortals*, and He destines them for a glorious end.

Whence comes the evil that is in the world? From an evil spirit thwarting the good. Plato once hints at the possibility of this, but the idea is so remote from his general conception that we need do no more than allude to it here. In Plato's view throughout the works that have come down to us, evil proceeds either from ignorance, or from the resistance offered by that unreasoning part which is united to man of necessity, if he is to be mortal, and in the overcoming of which lies man's probation. To these two must be added a third factor, lack of education—the want of that knowledge and learning which shall remove ignorance, and show a man how to curb and restrain his mortal part. Plato, therefore, like his master, regards wrong-doing as involuntary, and he gives three reasons for his opinion.

(1) With Socrates he holds that no man would willingly choose for himself

<sup>1</sup> Lit. as through dim and uncertain instruments (*organa*).

the worst, and therefore sin must be the result of ignorance: "*They know not what they do.*"

(2) But then, secondly, in the *Timæus* where he is, as it were, engrossed and carried away by his physical theories, he attributes it to physical causes, physical defects—evil done to the soul through bodily pains, or humours which become compressed within or wander over the body, and affect the soul;

(3) *Want of Education*. "It must be acknowledged," he says, "that the disease of the soul is folly (*anoia*, want of understanding; *Tim.*, 86 B. and 87 B.), but there are two kinds of folly, madness and ignorance. . . . No one is bad voluntarily, but becomes so through some evil disposition of the body and bad education"—literally an "*undisciplined* nature" or upbringing, for which, as Plato says, "we must often blame the planters rather than the plants, the educators rather than the educated."

That there is a vast amount of truth in all three "causes," no one can deny—the intimate action and reaction of body and soul are becoming more and more recognised, the more science penetrates into the secrets of nature—the harmfulness of ignorance and advantages of education are becoming with us topics almost as absorbing as they were to Plato. Nevertheless, granting all this, who does not feel that not one of the three reasons adduced goes to the root of the matter? Men sin in fulness of light, with abundant knowledge of what they are doing; defects and evil humours of the body do not necessarily affect the soul; the most carefully educated will often go astray, whilst those who have had as we say no proper start in life, will yet arrive manfully at the goal. These are truisms with which Plato must have been perfectly familiar. His three "causes" belong to the environment of the soul, and retard its development, but they are not the root of the evil. For this, Plato knew as well as we do that the soul itself, the nature of the man, must be searched, and therefore he nowhere excuses wrong-doing on the ground that it was caused by ignorance, or physical defect, or bad education.

**Sin is a Rebellion—a Revolt—Civil War.**—Plato strikes a truer note in that deep saying of his (*Laws*, i., 626 E.), "Every man is at war with himself," and must necessarily be so if he is to remain man at all. Rightly to understand this, we must remind ourselves of that threefold division of the soul which we met with in the *Timæus*—the allegorical representation wherein the reason directs, like the ruler on the Acropolis; the spirited part, like the military ally of the ruler, carries out her behests; and the desires, like the subjects at the foot of the rock, pursue in quietness and obedience the work that is necessary to the maintenance of the mortal life. Where the threefold division is faithfully adhered to, each part doing its own proper work, there is justice, peace, and harmony; but where the inferior part rises up in discontent and insubordination, and attempts to seize the reins of government, there is anarchy and misery—civil war, in fact, in the little state of man. Inasmuch, however, as some attempt at rebellion is continually proceeding on the part of the desires, do they not form the largest portion of us. Reason and will have always to be on guard against them. Hence the deep truth of Plato's saying: "*Every man is at war with himself.*"

**Plato's demonstration that the Threefold Division really exists.**—The account of the three parts of the soul given partly allegorically in the *Timæus* (and also again in the *Phædrus* under the figure of the charioteer and the noble and ignoble steeds), Plato works out in the *Republic* in language more "philosophical," but not more vivid. He demonstrates their existence as follows (*Rep.*, 439 *et seq.*):—

"The soul of a thirsty man," he says, "in so far as he is thirsty, desires



nothing except drink—this he yearns for, and strives to obtain. But if something draws the soul when thirsting away from drinking, that something in it will be different from the thirsty principle that leads him, like a beast, to drink. And yet this happens constantly. Many men are thirsty and oftentimes, and yet they will not drink. What may we say of them in such a case? May we not say that in the soul there is a something that bids, and a something that forbids them to drink, and that the something that forbids is different from and stronger than the something that bids? And this something that forbids, does it not proceed from the *reason*—and that other something that draws and attracts, from the passions and disease?"

"That is clear," says Glaucon.

"Not without reason, then, may we assume that these principles are two, and that they differ one from the other. That with which a man reasons, we may call the rational part of the soul; and that with which he desires and hungers and thirsts and feels the flutterings of other passions, we may term the irrational or appetitive part; the friend of certain gratifications and pleasures.

"These two principles, then, we must determine to exist in the soul, and to them we must add a third—the passionate or spirited element, which is independent, and not akin to desire, as we are apt to think (iii. 440). Do we not often observe that, when the desires have overpowered the reason in a man, he reproaches himself and is indignant at that which has forced him on, and, as though choosing between rival factions, the spirited element in him becomes the ally of the reason? But, that the spirited part of a man should make common cause with the desires, when reason has proved that she ought not to be opposed—this, I believe, you have never observed either in yourself or in any one else."

"No indeed," he replied.

(Here of course Plato is speaking of a good will, for that a perverted will does make common cause with the desires who can doubt?)

"And again, when a man thinks that he has done wrong, the more noble he is, the less will he be able to be indignant if he has to suffer hunger and cold or anything else of the same kind (as a punishment) from one who, he believes, brings these sufferings on him with justice, and, I maintain, his anger will not wish to rise up against such an one. But, when a man thinks that he is treated unjustly, then his spirit boils and chafes, and is on the side of what he believes to be just; and, by reason of the hunger and the cold, and all the other sufferings, he stands firm the more, and conquers, and does not cease from his noble beginning until he has either carried it through, or met his death; or, like a dog by the shepherd's voice, has been called back, and softened by the reason that dwells within him."

Who does not feel that the foregoing very beautiful description of the spirited element is psychologically true? A noble man does not resent punishment justly merited, but he does resent injustice, and will withstand it to the death, unless the voice of the Shepherd soften his resentment.

**The Harmony of the Soul.**—Having thus demonstrated the existence of three separate principles in the soul, Plato goes on to show (*Rep.*, 441 D., *et seq.*) that as justice in the state will consist in each of the three classes of which it is composed (traders, auxiliaries, and counsellors) doing its own proper work, and not meddling with that of any other class; so with the individual—"it is only when each of the three parts of the soul (reason, spirit, and desire) does its proper work, that a man will be just or righteous and do his own work." And what, we ask in turn, is the work of the soul? That Plato has already explained in an earlier part of the dialogue (353 D. *et seq.*). Just as the special

work of the eyes, he says, is seeing, and the special work of the ears, hearing, and just as each of these has its own special property or virtue, which fits it to perform its functions aright—so, in like manner, the soul has its own special work which can be delegated to no other—the direction and superintending of the life—and its own special property or virtue fitting it for its work, and this is nothing less than righteousness. But the soul, as we have seen, is a “composite force,” and the harmony of the three parts is necessary to carry out its work.

“And is it not the proper work of the rational part,” he asks, “to govern—inasmuch as she is wise and has the care of the whole soul—and of the spirited part to be her subject and ally?”

There is not a doubt of this.

“And when these two, reason and spirit, have been truly instructed and disciplined in their own functions, they will rule over the desires—the third and concupiscent part, that which is largest in the soul of each of us, and by nature most greedy of gain. Over this the two will keep guard, lest, through fulness of what are called bodily pleasures, it should wax mighty and strong, and refuse to do its own work, and try to enslave and get the rule over those whom it is not seemly that it should rule—and thus overturn the career of the whole man. Therefore these two, reason and spirit, will best keep watch together, over the whole soul and the body as well, against the foes that are without—the one counselling, the other defending, following the leader, and carrying out the decisions that issue from the Acropolis, with courage.

**Sin is a Rebellion of one Part against the Whole.**—Now we know what Plato means when he says that evil is nothing else than sedition, the uprising of a faction in the state of man, the revolt of the lower elements against their lawful ruler. What is evil, he asks, but “a meddlesomeness, and interference and rising up of one part of the soul (the appetitive part) against the whole, that it may rule where it has no right to rule, being what it is by nature—fitted only to be the servant of the ruling power? What are the confusion and error (proceeding from this rebellion of the appetitive part) but injustice, and unbridled desire, and cowardice, and ignorance, and, in a word, every form of evil?” (*Rep.*, iv., 444 B.).

**What shall it profit a man?—The Effects of Unrighteousness.**—We shall greatly mistake Plato’s meaning if we imagine that by the revolt of the lower nature and the destruction of soul-harmony, he is contemplating merely the lack of that grace and refinement which we associate with Greek notions of harmony and symmetry. “Due proportion has gone out of the life,” some may say, “but what of that?—the man is a man for all that.” Is he? Plato seems to think otherwise. The *man* in his view is restricted in the mortal animal to that very small part, that one divine part which is lodged in the Acropolis, and whose business it is to draw the whole up to its home and kindred in heaven. The one, however, may only too easily be overpowered by the many, and hidden out of sight—then what becomes of your man, with his god-like reason, his power of looking before and after? He may be starved to death.

The condition of things brought about by the domination of the lower nature has never been more forcibly described than by Plato himself in another of his wonderful allegories, that of *The Many-headed Monster* (*Rep.*, 588 B. *et seq.*). In this also as in that of the charioteer and his steeds, we have again the threefold image of the soul. The allegory itself follows naturally upon what has gone before. In the course of the inquiry into the nature of justice which forms the basis of the republic, it had been brought



forward by Adeimantus as one of the most widely-spread beliefs of the day, that to be perfectly wicked and unjust was profitable to the unjust man *so long as he was not found out*, but was considered by others to be a just and good man. "Let us see," says Plato, "whether this is so, or not. Let us look at the effect which right-doing and wrong-doing have respectively, on the man *himself*. To that end, he says, let us fashion, in words, an image of the soul that he who makes such an assertion may see before his eyes what he is upholding."

"What sort of image?" asks Glaucon.

"A composite image," said Socrates, "such as the myths of old describe, the Chimæra, or Scylla, or Cerberus—and other creatures of the kind, in which, it is said, many forms had grown together into one."

"There are said to have been such creatures, certainly," he assented.

"Do you now, then," Socrates rejoined, "model the form of a manifold and many-headed monster, encircled by a ring of heads of all manner of animals, both wild and tame, and able to produce all these out of itself, and to transform them at pleasure."

"To make such an image," said Glaucon, "would be the task of a skilful artist. Nevertheless, since words are more plastic than wax, or any such material, let us consider it as modelled."

"Make now another form, distinct from this, that of a lion, and yet another, that of a man; but let the first (the monster) be by far the largest, and the second (the lion) larger than the third (the man)."

"That," said he, "is easier; it is done."

"Now join these three into *one*, as though in some way they had grown together."

"They are joined," said he.

"Now fashion about them an outer shape or form, as of a man, so that to any one who is not able to look within, but sees the outer covering only, the whole may appear as a single creature—a *human being*."

"It is done," said he.

"Let us now say to him who maintained that it is profitable for the human being to be unjust, that he is maintaining nothing else than this, viz. that it is profitable for him, by feasting them sumptuously, to strengthen the many-shaped monster and the lion and all that appertains to the lion, and to starve the *man* and weaken him, so that he may be dragged whithersoever it pleases either of the other two—and may neither accustom the one to the other, nor make them friendly, but must suffer them to fight, and bite, and devour one another."

"Undoubtedly," says Glaucon, "that is what the eulogiser of injustice says."

"And, on the other hand, will not he who maintains that justice is profitable, declare that we must do and say that by which the *man* that is within may obtain complete mastery over the entire human being, that he may take the management of the many-headed creature as does the husbandman—cultivating and ennobling the gentler qualities, and not allowing the wild ones to grow—and making the lion-nature his ally; and so, caring for all in common, and making them friendly to one another and to himself, is it not thus in harmony—that he will rear them?"

"Yes," he said, "that is exactly what the upholder of righteousness maintains."

"In every way, then, the eulogiser of righteousness speaks truly, of unrighteousness falsely; for in regard to pleasure and honour and advantage,

he who praises righteousness is right, whilst he who censures is neither healthy in his censure, nor does he know what he blames."

"He does not indeed," said he.

"Let us then," continued Socrates, "try to persuade the unjust gently of the better way, for he does not err wilfully. Let us say to him: "Sweet sir, do not both the noble and the base develop somewhat in this way—the noble, by subjecting the animal part of the nature to the man, or, better, to the *Divine* in man—the base, by enslaving the gentler part to the rude and wild? Will he assent, or not?"

"He will," said Glaucon, "if he is persuaded by me."

"Can it then," pursued Socrates, "on this reasoning, profit any one to gain money unjustly, when the result is that the noblest part of him is enslaved to the worst? If a man were to sell son or daughter for gold into slavery, and that amongst savage and wicked man, would it profit him? No, not if he received a very large sum therefor. So, in like manner, if a man sell without compunction the most divine part of himself into slavery to the most godless and detestable—is he not a miserable wretch? Eriphylē took the necklace as the price of her husband's life, but is he not taking a bribe of gold to effect a more fearful ruin?"

"Far more fearful," said Glaucon. "I will answer for him."

Then Plato goes on in forcible language to show how the sins and follies of men proceed from the waxing strong and lusty of the appetites within him. The intemperate, he says, is censured, because in him the terrible many-shaped monster has been allowed too much freedom. And when men are blamed for self-will and ill-temper, it is because the lion and serpent-nature in them has grown out of proportion. And luxury and softness are accused when by relaxing and weakening the lion-nature they have produced cowardice in it. And a man is censured for flattery and meanness when he puts this same lion-nature, his own high spirit, into subjection to the turbulent monster, and for the sake of the wherewithal to gratify its insatiate cravings, accustoms it from youth up to be dragged through the mire, and *from a lion to become a monkey*.

The man, therefore, who yields to the many-headed appetite within is a slave, dragged hither and thither at their caprice, for the noble and good will which ought to have been his ally and defender is no longer a lion but—a monkey. The force of righteous scorn can no further go.

[The whole argument supplies a most striking commentary on the great question of the MASTER:—

*"What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"*

and a comment much needed by ourselves, for is it not the case that we are too apt to associate the "loss" of the soul only with its penalty in the next world? Plato does not overlook this aspect of it, but his argument here is this: What will it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world—at the expense of the Divine part within him being merged in the animal within him?—Even in this life the process is necessarily beginning.]

Turning, then, to the other side of the allegory, he says: "Courageous we shall call the man who holds fast, through pain and pleasure, the command of reason about what is, and what is *not* to be feared."

And *wise* we shall call him who has in him that little part which rules and issues the command—that part which has in itself the knowledge of what is best for each of the three parts and for the whole man. And we shall call him *sound-minded* in whom these three principles exist in friendship and harmony



—both ruler and ruled agreeing that reason must govern—and do not rise in rebellion against her.

Other sound-mindedness or safety,<sup>1</sup> than this, he concludes, there is none—either for the state or the individual.

*The severity of the contest.*—Before this state of harmony is reached, however, sore and terrible is the contest. The uprisings of the lower nature and the victory of reason and will Plato has depicted in the allegory of the charioteer. His description of reason victorious may well be given as a pendant to the foregoing triumph of the many-headed monster. Our readers will recollect that the charioteer has two steeds to manage, one noble, the other the reverse:—

“The more noble of the two steeds,” says Plato (*Phædrus*, 253 D.), “is upright and well-built, with lofty neck and aquiline nose, white in colour and dark-eyed—a lover of honour with temperance and modesty, and a comrade of true glory—needing no spur, guided only by word or exhortation. The other is a crooked, heavy animal, put together anyhow, with short, thick neck and snub nose, black skin, and grey bloodshot eyes; he is the comrade of insolence, and a braggart, shag-eared and deaf, hardly yielding to whip and spur.

“When the other two—the charioteer (reason), and the noble horse (spirit)—will not do what this villain (the appetitive part) demands, he abuses them, and, waxing ferocious, gets the bit between his teeth and pulls shamelessly. The charioteer is in a desperate plight, until, summoning all his determination, he drags the bit with a wrench from between the teeth of the animal, and covers his abusive tongue and jaws with blood, and forcing his legs and haunches down to the ground, punishes him severely. When this has happened several times, the animal leaves off its insolence, it is tamed and humbled, and follows the (forethought) will of the charioteer.”

*The remedies against evil.*—Here again Plato rises far above the sophistical teachers of his day, in that he does not content himself with pointing out defects and weaknesses, but immediately proceeds to show how they may be removed or remedied. Now it is needless to say that Plato's conception of sin must of necessity differ vitally from that of the Hebrews, or from the Christian standpoint. Of the enormity of sin as committed against a Father who has loaded us with benefits and loving-kindnesses—of sin in its worst aspect of ingratitude, he could know little, and consequently of that feeling which enters so largely into our sense of sin—the longing to make reparation by contrition and repentance—we find little or nothing in Plato's system.

In this respect Plato undoubtedly failed to do justice not only to the popular religion, but to one of the most sacred feelings of the human heart. Most assuredly the whole ancient world knew something of the love of God. “God left not Himself without witness,” says the Apostle, “in that He gave us fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.”

There is ample evidence that the tie of dependence which binds man to the Unseen was keenly and vividly felt in earlier and better days.<sup>2</sup> A natural and honourable instinct prompts (as Homer knew) to “prayer and offerings and humble vows whensoever a man hath failed or trespassed.” But Homer's age was not Plato's, and this natural instinct had been so abused by those who traded on it, that our philosopher can see nothing in it but an attempt to bribe the higher powers who avenge injustice, and so escape punishment.

Plato's abhorrence of evil, then, is not, so to speak, GODWARD, but man-

<sup>1</sup> Probably a play on the word *sôphrôn*, from *sôs*, *phrên*, *sôs*, means “safe” as well as “sound.”

<sup>2</sup> We have traced it so late as Pindar—see *ante*, his love for Apollo.

ward. He hates it for what it works in the man himself—deterioration and ruin, and perhaps his testimony is all the more valuable to us from its concentration on this one point.

As to his remedies—with the single exception of the leaving out of the deepest of all motive-powers, repentance wrought by the love of God—they are psychologically true and contain deep forecasts of Christianity and of modern views. They are—

(1) *Education*.—To enter fully into Plato's views on this great subject—one which we may fairly call the all-engrossing subject of his later years—would require a volume. Suffice it to say here that, with him, education should begin as soon as the child is born,<sup>1</sup> and be continued steadily without intermission: "It seems probable," he says in the *Republic* (iv. 425 B.), "that the education with which a man starts will give the whole bent to his life—*Does not like always call to like?*"

Education, again, is "taking the dye of the laws"—imbue a man with the spirit of good laws in his childhood, their colour will tinge his own life. Hence, although in the *Republic* (iv. 429 D. *et seq.*), compulsion is not to be used,<sup>2</sup> yet in the *Laws* (vii. 804 D.), education is to be enforced, inasmuch as the child belongs to the state rather than to its parents. Finally, in the same work, he says emphatically (*Laws*, i. 644), that true education is the best thing the best men can have, adding that if a man should swerve from it in any way, it is possible to rectify it (set it upright again), and this he must do according to the best of his ability all the days of his life.

"Education," then, with Plato is a lifelong process, no less necessary for the man than for the child. It is by education in its two branches, music and gymnastic, the one training the soul, the other the body, that the lower nature is to be kept in subjection. By "music" we must here understand with Plato all that helps to develop the reasoning power, the man within the man, no less than that one branch of it to which we now limit the name. Bearing this in mind, we can follow our philosopher when he urges that the only way of maintaining true harmony in the soul is by the training of the reason and the spirited part—the man and the lion-nature—by music and gymnastic: "Will not the united influence of music and gymnastic (sound training of mind and body) bring these two into accord," he asks, "urging on and nourishing the reason by noble words and lessons, and soothing and civilising and moderating the fierceness of passion by harmony and rhythm?"

(b) *Punishment*.—But of what avail are harmony and rhythm against those terrible uprisings of the lower nature which threaten in their vehemence to "overturn the whole career of the man"? Some sterner measures are necessary here, and it need not surprise us to find Plato a strong believer in the efficacy of self-discipline carried to the length of self-inflicted punishment.

The charioteer, as we remember, chastises his unruly steed severely and repeatedly until the animal is tamed. Reason, in the wise man of the other allegory, takes somewhat the same course. By a change of metaphor Plato says that the example of the husbandman is to be followed; some of the heads encircling the monster are to be cut off at once like noxious weeds—"Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth"—the others are to be cultivated with care. We can only briefly point out the wisdom

<sup>1</sup> Nay, before. Plato recognises (though very imperfectly) what we are only beginning to appreciate as it deserves—the influence of the mother on the unborn babe (*Cf. Laws*, vii. 789).

<sup>2</sup> Knowledge acquired under compulsion, says Plato (*Rep.*, vii. 536 E.), obtains no hold on the mind. Education should be a sort of amusement, and you will then discover the bent of the child—another forecast of modern views.



shown in this discrimination. Not all impulses are bad and hurtful. The reverse is the case. Plato has no such aim as that of the later Stoics, no wish to reduce man to a state of apathy by deadening within him every natural sympathy or feeling. He recognises that many desires and emotions of the soul are not only innocent but healthful—the love of pleasure in moderation, for instance. All that he contends for is, that the noxious desires shall be cut down, and the helpful ones cultivated so that they shall not be allowed to run to seed or grow out of proportion. This process can only be carried out by self-discipline. This, then, is the first view of punishment—a self-inflicted penance, ordered by reason the charioteer and the husbandman and carried out by her ally spirit or will.

Plato, however, carries his view still further, and contends that punishment inflicted by an external authority is the great remedy for evil. His argument here is that every one ought to be *under rule*: “Shall we not say,” he argues in the *Republic*, “that a man ought to be the servant of the best, of him who has the Divine as ruler within him—not with the notion that this subjection will be to his hurt—but because it is better for every one to be ruled by the Divine and wise—best of all, if the ruler be akin to the man and within him—but if not, appointed from without, in order that all, being under the same rule (that of the Divine and wise) may, as far as possible, be equals and friends? On what grounds can we say that it profits a man to be unjust or intemperate, or to do any base act if he becomes worse thereby, even although he may acquire greater wealth or any other power?”

“On no grounds whatever,” Glaucon rejoined.

“How then can it profit an unjust man to escape unseen and unpunished? Does not he who remains undetected and unpunished become still worse, whilst in him who is detected and punished the animal element is subdued and tamed, and the gentle element set free, and the whole soul—thus acquiring sound-mindedness, and justice, and wisdom—is ennobled and brought into a condition which exceeds in honour that of the body which acquires strength and beauty and health, in the same proportion as the soul itself exceeds in honour the body?”

“Undoubtedly,” said he.

The grand passage, however, in the *Gorgias* (477 B. *et seq.*), where Socrates declares sin to be the greatest evil in the world, combines both views of punishment—the voluntary submission and the judge exterior to the man—and hence approaches very nearly to the Christian standpoint.

“Just as certain evils afflict the body,” the argument begins, “so do we assume that there is a certain evil which afflicts the soul, and which we call injustice, or ignorance, or cowardice, as the case may be. There are, therefore, three evils, corresponding to the conditions of body and soul, these three are poverty, disease, and unrighteousness. By far the most ignoble and disgraceful of these is unrighteousness, and not only the most ignoble but the worst, because it brings with it both suffering and damage. It is really more painful to be unjust, and undisciplined, and cowardly, and ignorant than to be poor and sick. A sinful condition of the soul outweighs all other miseries from the exceeding great damage and astounding misery which accompany it. Hence evils of the soul, such as injustice and intemperance of any kind, are really the greatest evils in existence by reason of the damage which they inflict.

“But, just as there is a way of escaping from poverty—the art of making money—and a way of becoming free from disease—the healing art—so is there a way of freeing the soul from the greatest of evils—the enduring

of a penalty, inflicted by a just judge. The remedy is not a pleasant one, but useful; and just as a patient who is being treated by a physician will bear patiently any pain in order that he may be freed from a bodily evil, so it is with the health of the soul.

"Certainly, he who does not require a physician is happier than he who does; but supposing a man to be afflicted with any evil either of body or of soul, in which case would he be the more wretched—when he is treated by the physician and freed from his evil, or when he has no treatment and keeps his evil? Certainly, in the latter case, he will be in a worse plight, and so the treatment of the soul by the suffering of a just penalty—brings men to soberness of thought,<sup>1</sup> makes them more righteous, and becomes the healing of the sin-sick soul. . . .

"Hence, if any one has committed an act of injustice, he will himself, of his own free will, hasten to him to whom he must pay the penalty to the judge, as to the physician, giving all diligence, lest the disease of unrighteousness should linger festering in his soul, and become incurable. . . . A wrong act, whether our own or that of our friends, must not be hidden, but brought into the light, that the penalty may be paid, and health of soul regained; and we must constrain ourselves and others not to be cowardly; but—as those who are pursuing the noble and the good—we must present ourselves bravely, shutting our eyes like those who are under the knife or the cautery of the physician, and not heeding the pain. If one have committed a fault worthy of stripes, he must inflict the stripes; or of chains, he must let himself be chained; or of a fine, he must pay it; or of banishment, he must go into exile; or of death, he must endure it—appearing as the first accuser against himself and those belonging to him, and using his eloquence for this very purpose, that when their misdeeds are brought to light, they may be freed from the greatest evil—unrighteousness."

Socrates' little audience are represented as being so amazed at this enunciation of his views that one of them says in a sort of aside to Chærophon, a disciple of Socrates:—

"Tell me, Chærophon, does Socrates mean this in earnest or in jest?"

"To me he seems to be exceedingly in earnest," rejoins Chærophon, and the conclusion arrived at is, that if Socrates really is in earnest and if what he says is true, then men in general are doing the very reverse of what they ought to do.

We need hardly point out here how closely in the foregoing Plato anticipates the Christian view—the hatred against sin as the greatest of evils, the hastening to the Judge—"Correct me, O God, but not in Thine anger"—the self-accusation—the enduring of the discipline necessary for purification—all are included in Plato's deeply thought out argument. He seems to say with St. Paul, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?" And if he cannot add St. Paul's thanksgiving, he is nevertheless manful enough also to say with him: "I keep under my body (*lit.* I bruise my body) lest that by any means after I have preached to others I myself should prove a cast-away."

## THE SOUL'S PROGRESS

### CONVERSION—THE TURNING TO THE LIGHT

When we pass in review Plato's remedies for the ills of the soul—his faith in the education of mind and body, of the ennobling effects of the study of the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Æschylus, ante*, p. 365.



world-order, of the victories to be achieved by self-discipline and mortification of the baser self—we can but say: Verily, if there had been a philosophy given whereby men could be saved, salvation would have come by the philosophy of Plato.

Did Plato's philosophy regenerate the world? Let the history of the world testify. Few indeed were the souls that listened to his words. For the mass of men they had no meaning. What the Divine law could not do, Plato's philosophy was powerless to effect. The reason, of course, is patent to us—both law and philosophy imply the existence in man of a power which ought to follow their behests, but has become unfitted or too feeble for the task. We have Plato's own testimony to this universal truth. Not the poor mortal part only with its cravings is to blame—it is not the fault of the ignoble steed alone that the wings of the soul are lost. "Many a wing is broken in the conflict," says Plato in the *Phædrus*, "by the fault of the charioteer." Reason itself is at fault—it has become darkened and obscured; it is not fit to take the lead to direct either its own steeds or those of others.

"If the light that is in a man be darkness, how great is that darkness!" (*Rep.*, vii. 514 *et seq.*).

That Plato recognised the great fact that the light of nature is not enough, that not only light, but the power to turn to the light, must come to a man from without, from above, there is not the shadow of a doubt. Reason must be illuminated by a power outside itself. This great doctrine is not the least part of Plato's testimony to truth, and he has embodied it in the grand parable of the cave and its shadows.

#### THE CAVE AND ITS SHADOWS

"Compare," says Socrates (in whose mouth, as usual, the allegory is put), "our nature as regards enlightenment and non-enlightenment with the following state of things:—

**"The Cave of the World and its Prisoners.**—Imagine human beings living in an underground cave-like dwelling, the entrance to which is open to the light, and extends along the whole length of the cave. Here they have been since their childhood, with both limbs and neck confined by chains, so that they remain on the same spot, and can only look before them, being prevented by the chains from turning their heads. The light of a fire above and at a distance blazes behind them; and between the fire and the prisoners is a raised way, along which runs a low wall like the screens which marionette players have in front of them, and over which they exhibit their puppets.<sup>1</sup>

**"The Shadows cast by the Realities Behind.**—Imagine, now, men passing along this wall and carrying implements of all sorts, and statues and figures of animals in stone and wood and divers materials, which appear on the wall; and imagine that, as in reality, some of the men are talking, whilst others are silent.

"You speak of a strange picture and strange prisoners," said Glaucon, one of the personæ in the Dialogue.

"Like ourselves," Socrates replies, "for do you suppose that men thus

<sup>1</sup> "The juggler or conjurer requires a table or screen in order to hide from the eye of the spectator much that, if seen, would rob his performance of the charm of wonder. And, just as the wall conceals much that would thus explain to the spectator what now appears to him inexplicable and marvellous, so do our prisoners in like manner now behold only part of what is going on behind them. They have not even the perfect outline of the men who are passing along the wall, or of the objects which they carry" (H. Müller, *in loc. cit.*, v. p. 732).

chained can see more of themselves or of one another than the shadows which are thrown by the fire on the side of the cave opposite to them?"

"How can they see anything else," said he, "if all their days they are not allowed to move their heads?"

"But what of the things that are carried along?—will it not be the same with them—their shadows only will be seen?"

"How can it be otherwise?"

"And if they are able to converse with one another, would they not suppose that they were naming things which were actually before them?"<sup>1</sup>

"Necessarily."

"And again, if the prison had an echo rebounding from the opposite side, when one of the passers-by spoke, don't you think they would imagine the shadow to be the speaker?"

"Most certainly they would."

"To men in such a situation, then," said Socrates, "truth would be in every way nothing but the shadows of the images."

"That would be so of necessity," said he.

*How does a man feel at first when released from darkness and chains?—*"Observe," said Socrates, "what would follow if the prisoners were released and disabused of the illusion—if such a thing could happen to them in a natural way. When any of them had been set free and forced suddenly to stand up and turn his neck round, and walk, and look up at the light—all this would cause him pain, and by reason of the glare of light he would be unable to perceive those real things of which he had formerly seen the shadows. And if some one were then to say to him that formerly indeed he had seen an illusion, but now—having come somewhat nearer to reality, and looking more towards true being—he saw more clearly; what do you suppose he would reply? Or again, if he were shown things passing by, and required to decide what each was, do you not think that he would be at a loss, and would consider the shadows which he had formerly seen as more true than the real objects which are now shown him?"

"Most certainly he would," he said.

"And then, if he were compelled to look at the light itself, would not he have pain in his eyes, and turn away from it, and take refuge in such objects of vision as he could see, and believe these to be in reality clearer than the objects shown him?"

"That would be so," said he.

**The Process of Enlightenment a Gradual One.**—"And then," continued Socrates, "if some one forced him thence up a rough and steep ascent, nor desisted until he had brought him into the light of the sun, would not our friend feel pain and irritation at this proceeding? and afterwards, when he approached the sun, would not his eyes be so dazzled by the light, that he could not see one of those things that are now called 'realities'?"

"Not all at once," he said.

"He would require, I think, to get accustomed to the sight of the upper world, and first it would be easiest for him to perceive shadows, and then reflections of men and other objects in the water, and later the objects themselves. And afterwards he would gaze on things in heaven, and the heaven itself by night, the light of the stars and of the moon—and this would be easier for him than to gaze on the sun and the sunlight by day. Then at last, I imagine, he would be able to look at the sun itself—not the mere semblance of it in the water or any other place—but the sun in itself, and in its own

<sup>1</sup> Reading, with Professor Jowett, *paronta*.



proper place; and he would contemplate it as it is. And then he would go on to conclude that the sun is the giver of the seasons and the years, and the guardian of all things in the visible world, and in some way the cause of all that they beheld?"

"Clearly," he replied, "he would come to this conclusion at last."

*How the man who has seen the true light regards the things of earth.*—"What then?" says Socrates. "When he remembered his former dwelling, and the wisdom of the cave, and his fellow-prisoners, don't you think that he would congratulate himself upon the change, and pity them? And if honours were conferred among them, and rewards bestowed on those who should observe the passing shadows most quickly, and should remember best which were wont to come first, which followed, and which came together—and should thus be best able to predict the future—do you think he would be very eager to have these rewards, or would envy those who were honoured or in power among them? Would he not say with Homer (*Od.*, xi., 490),

"Better to be the hired labourer of a needy man and to suffer anything, rather than think as they do, and live their life.'"

"I, too, think," said Glaucon, "that he would rather suffer anything than entertain such notions and live in such a way."

*How the man who has seen the light is treated by the world.*—"And again, think of this also," said Socrates. "If such an one were to descend again and seat himself in the old place, would not his eyes, on suddenly coming out of the sun, be full of darkness?"

"Naturally," said he.

"And if he were obliged to measure those shadows again, and so compete with his fellow-prisoners who had always remained in the cave, whilst his sight was dim and before his eyes were steady—and no little time might be required before they became accustomed to the darkness—would he not excite ridicule, and would not they say that he had gone up to the world above and come down again without his eyes, and that even to try to make the ascent was not worth the trouble? And if any one took in hand to set them free and lead them up to the light—if they could in any way lay hold on him, would they not put him to death?"

"Not a doubt of it," said he.

"Now, dear Glaucon," said Socrates, "this whole allegory may be transferred to what has been said before: this visible world is the prison-house, and the light of the fire in it is the might of the sun. And if you take the journey upwards and the sight of things above to denote the ascent of the soul to the realm of thought (where God shines) you will not miss my meaning—since you are anxious to learn it—but God alone knows whether or no I have chanced upon the truth. What at least appears truth to me is this," Socrates concludes in words with which we are already familiar (517 B.), "that, in the domain of knowledge, the idea of THE GOOD is seen last, and only with toil and trouble; but, when seen, we must conclude that it is the universal cause of all that is right and beautiful—bringing forth light and the lord of light to rule the visible world, but itself ruling in the world of thought, and being therein the source of truth and reason. And to this—even the Idea of the Good—must he look who would act with true understanding either in private or in public."

The allegory needs little comment: the darkness in the cave is, of course, the darkness of the natural reason, of spiritual ignorance; the chain wherewith the prisoners are bound are the chains of habit, prejudice, and self-deception, which prevent their turning so as to know one another, much less perceive the

realities behind. These are, as we know, the ideas, the eternal verities, of which earthly things are only copies, more or less distorted, like the shadows on the wall. The fire that casts the light is the visible sun, the light of sense or human perception, or natural reason, which the prisoners take to be the true light, the Divine light of the mind. The voice that comes from heaven, inasmuch as it rebounds from the opposite wall whereon are the shadows—*i.e.* comes through a human mouthpiece (a *prophetes* = one who speaks for God)—they suppose to proceed from one of themselves and pay no heed to it. In this way, the prisoners in their delusion imagine truth to be, as Plato puts it, *nothing but the shadows of the images*. Then follows the sudden conversion of one of the number; the man is turned *towards* the light, and then thinks in his bewilderment that the things which he beheld with the eyes of sense in the world-cave were really truer than the heavenly realities which he now beholds but dimly with the eye of the soul. His enlightenment is gradual, but sure. He is not left to himself, but forced, as it were, by some good spirit, up the steep hill of doubt and conflict, until at length he gains the summit; darkness and doubt are gone, and he stands like the winged soul in the *Phædrus* on the outermost ridge, in the very presence of the true light, the good, the Sun of Righteousness Himself. Then, and not till then (“the good is seen at last, and only after toil and trouble”), does the whole truth flash upon him, the vivid reality of the eternal world, the empty nothingness of the shadows in the darkness. Then he appraises the things of earth at their true value, and wonders with himself how he could ever have joined so eagerly in the pitiful contests in the cave—the counting of the shadows, the calculating of petty chances—for the sake of the yet more pitiful honour of being applauded by the poor, blind multitude in their delusion. Touched by a tender pity for them, he descends once more into the cave to lead them up into the blessed region of light, but, confused by the darkness, he at first stumbles—he has his treasure in an earthen vessel—and the multitude are not slow to jeer at him and mock. They bid him go find his eyes—they are the ones who see. He recovers his footing and his calmness, depicts the true light as he has seen it, and urges them to make trial of the ascent—until at length, to stop his importunity, they do what the world has ever done to the wisest of her sons, lay hold on him and—kill him.

Such in brief is the progress of the pilgrim from this world to a better, as related by Plato. Has he overdrawn the picture? We trow not.

## DEATH AND IMMORTALITY

The immortality of the soul is a truth so absolutely certain to Plato that it forms, as it were, part of himself—his whole philosophical system turns upon it. The grand doctrines upon which his ethical teaching is based, all centre in the one idea that man is made—not for time, but for eternity. “Great,” he says in the *Republic* (x. 608 B.), “is the issue at stake—in the *agon*, the struggle between good and evil—greater than appears; nothing less than this, whether a man is to be good or bad. Neither by honour, nor riches, nor power, nor the influence of poetry, must we be led to become indifferent to justice and virtue.” Why? Because justice and virtue are the eternal realities—all else belongs to the things that perish. “What,” he asks, “can become great in a short time? And must not our whole life from childhood to old age be reckoned ‘short’ in comparison with all time? Ought then any immortal being to be eager about this short space of time, which is a mere nothing? Should he not rather consider the whole—eternity?”



Nowhere is Plato's earnestness on this vital question—the future life of the soul—set forth so vividly as in the *Phædo*, that most beautiful and touching of all his works. The picture of the aged Socrates, just about to drink the hemlock, reassuring and comforting his disciples by his own strong hope of immortality—doing his utmost to provide for them those “rafts” of deep reasoning which shall bear them up in the absence of any surer vessel, any Divine word concerning the future life—is unspeakably pathetic. It can only be compared in its impressiveness to that yet grander parting scene wherein He, of whom Socrates is a true type and forerunner, gives to His disciples, the true Divine Word, the Ark of the Covenant, even Himself.<sup>1</sup>

These “rafts,” these arguments, in the *Phædo*, then, well deserve our most thoughtful consideration. Let us go back for a few moments to the last hours of Socrates, and see him in his cell surrounded by his little band of sorrowing followers.

**How the good Man regards Death.**—During his confinement in prison, while awaiting the return of the sacred ship from Delos, Socrates, as we remember, occupied himself in composing verses, making “music” in the popular sense of the term. On the day of his death, one of those present tells him (*Phædo*, 60 C. *et seq.*) that Evenus, the poet, was very anxious to know why he who had never made verses before did so now. Socrates, in reply, relates that often, at different times, a vision had appeared to him in a dream, and always given him the same command—to “make and practise music,” and that hitherto he had interpreted the words as an exhortation to continue—as those who are already running a race are urged on by the spectators—in the “music” which he was already making and practising, the music of philosophy, which had always seemed to him “the noblest music.” Now, however, he had a scruple about it, and thought it better to obey the injunction literally, and compose a few verses before he departed. “Tell Evenus this,” he added, “and bid him farewell, and say that if he is a wise man, I would have him follow me without delay. To-day, as it seems, I go hence, for so have the Athenians ordained.”

All that Socrates has bidden them tell Evenus shall be told, Simmias replies, but from what he knows of the man, Evenus will not be in the least likely to wish to follow Socrates.

“What!” says Socrates, “is not Evenus a lover of wisdom?”

“I think he is,” says Simmias.

“Then,” says Socrates, “Evenus will wish to follow me, as will all who are worthy to share in this matter; but,” he adds, “he will not lay hands upon himself, for this is held to be against the Divine law (*ou themiton*).” Cebes immediately asks why this is held to be unlawful, and so, most naturally,<sup>2</sup> the conversation turns upon that which fills the thoughts of all present—death, the different ways in which it is regarded, and the *one* way in which alone the wise man can regard it. Socrates is going on a journey, and he cannot spend the time which remains between now and the setting of the sun better than by searching into and talking of the nature of the journey. In regard, then, to the argument: Why, if the philosopher wishes to die, it is against Divine law that he should lay hands on himself, Socrates’ answer is most characteristic—Man must not in this respect be his own benefactor, he says; he must wait for another. This seems strange, but it must have some reason. The mystical doctrine, indeed, which is taught to the initiated—that men are in a kind of prison, the door of which they may not themselves open in order to escape—seems to him

<sup>1</sup> With desire.

<sup>2</sup> As some will have it, most artistically—the one does not shut out the other.

high and not easy to penetrate. But *this* at least has been well said, *that there are gods who care for no men, and whose possession we are*. What would we say if something belonging to ourselves (say, one of our slaves) were to take his own life without waiting till we had given an indication of *our* will in the matter? Would we not be indignant and punish him if punishment were in our power? In like manner, it is not unreasonable to hold that men must not take their own lives, but wait till God sends necessity upon them—till death comes to them, as it has now come to Socrates. But then the objection is raised: Why should a wise man seek to escape by death from the service of so good a Master as the God who cares for him, and whose possession he is? A fool might rejoice, indeed, but not a wise man.

Against this objection, Socrates says, he can see that he is expected to defend himself as though he were in court. Well, he will try to make a more successful defence before them now than he made formerly before his judges.

"If I did not think," he continues, "that I am going first to other gods wise and good, and then to men who have departed and are better men than those now on earth, it would be wrong in me not to feel grief at the approach of death. Understand this, however, clearly," he adds, "that I *hope*, indeed, to go to good men, although I cannot be quite sure on that point; but *if I can be confident* of any such matters, I am of this, that I am going to gods and masters who are altogether good. For this reason, I am not grieved like others, but have a joyful hope that something awaits the dead, and as they said of old, some far better thing for the good than for the bad."

Simmius begs him not to keep his thought, this joyful hope, to himself, but to share it with his friends before he departs; and Socrates says he will try to show why a man who has been pursuing wisdom all his life should "quite naturally" be of good cheer on the approach of death, and have a joyful hope that *there*, after he departs, in that unknown land, the greatest blessings will be his.

Why, then, should it be "quite natural" that a lover of wisdom should long for death? Because, Socrates answers, in so far as he *is* a lover of wisdom, he has been doing nothing else than this all his life long—*practising dying, and pursuing death*. How foolish would it be, then, when death comes, to grieve over what he has so earnestly striven for? We who know from Plato's later works his vivid conception of the terrible conflict between the higher and lower natures in man, know also what Socrates' hearers did not at once perceive, that the "dying" and the "death" so longed for mean the dying unto evil, and the complete victory over it. We have here a grand anticipation of St. Paul's "*I die daily*." Nevertheless, St. Paul's view of death was not Plato's. The Apostle says in another place, "*Not for that I would be unclothed, but clothed upon*"; whereas what Plato most looks forward to is the being *unclothed*, the being released from the prison of the body, and this is what death effects. "What is death but the separation of soul and body?" he asks, and how does the true lover of wisdom regard the body? Is he eagerly concerned about its so-called *pleasures*? about eating and drinking, about dress and adornment, or any pleasure of sense whatsoever? Will he care for anything more than nature requires? Nay, in all these things the lover of wisdom strives to keep his soul free from communion with the body—would fain be rid of the body.<sup>1</sup> And yet the many consider that a man for whom these bodily pleasures have no attraction is almost as good as dead.

Then, again, he asks, Does the body *help* the soul, when the latter takes it into partnership in any inquiry? Is not the body rather an obstruction to

<sup>1</sup> To want nothing is divine; to want little, next to the divine.



the thinking power? For both by sight and hearing, and the other senses, men are apt to be deceived. Is not truth made clear by thought alone? And is not thought best when the mind is undisturbed, free from the influences of sight, and hearing, and pleasure, and pain, and so far as possible gathered up into herself and independent of the body.

Then, thirdly, as regards the world of ideas, the realm of pure spirit—we admit that an absolute justice and an absolute beauty and goodness exist—but were these ever seen with the eyes of the body? The very notion is ridiculous.

In every way then the body is a hindrance to the philosopher, and not a help. He is distracted from higher pursuits in a thousand ways by the necessity of supplying its wants; he is hindered still further by its liability to disease. The body fills us with all sorts of cravings and yearnings and desires and cares. Whence come wars and factions and fightings amongst us, but from the body and its lusts? Do not wars arise about the possession of money, and is not money demanded by the body to which we are enslaved? "If, then," so this part of the argument concludes, "it is not possible to know anything in its purity (*katharos*) while we are joined to the body; there are but two alternatives—either we can attain to the possession of knowledge not at all, or only after death. While we are still living," Socrates adds, "it seems to me that we shall in this way come nearest to knowledge, if we have as little as possible to do with the body, and hold no communion with it except of necessity, and are not defiled by contact with its nature, but cleanse ourselves from it until God Himself shall release us. And then, being thus purified, we shall be freed from the foolishness of the body, and in all probability shall be with others like-minded, and shall of ourselves know all in purity.<sup>1</sup> This is perhaps the truth, for," he argues, "it can never be in accordance with Divine law (*me ou themiton*), that the impure should reach or touch the pure."

This, then, is the hope in which Socrates departs—the negative side of it—that his soul will be set free from its unreasoning carnal companion—the body. But the converse of this, the positive aspect of the good hope, is, as we have seen, not wanting, and very beautiful is the conception of it which Socrates now puts forth: he is going by death to lose his hindrance, the body, but by death also, *he will be united to his love*—that for which he has been longing and striving, yea, and praying all his life long—*wisdom*. There have been many, he says, who when robbed by death of an earthly love, of wife or child, have been willing to go down to Hades, led by the hope of seeing them, and being there together with the beloved whom they yearned for. And should any one who really loves wisdom, and has this same strong belief that he will never attain to her in any worthy manner except in the other world—should such an one be grieved when he comes to die, and not rather joyfully depart hither?

And the way and means of attaining to this "good hope" Socrates has already pointed out—the soul is unchained from the desires of the body, and made fit to meet her love by purification. It is not according to Divine law that the impure should touch or embrace the pure—purification is a lifelong process; it is the dying unto evil and the seeking after wisdom. There is ONE TRUE COIN for which the wise man will willingly exchange all that he hath, and that is, wisdom.<sup>2</sup> The many go on exchanging pleasure for pleasure, pain for pain, fear for fear, much for little—this is not the true exchange. The true

<sup>1</sup> Cf. "Now I know in part . . . but then I shall know even as also I am known."

<sup>2</sup> Cf. "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman seeking goodly pearls, who when he hath found one pearl of great price goeth and selleth all that he hath and buyeth that pearl."

exchange consists in a cleansing of all these things, and temperance and righteousness and manliness (*andreia*)—yea, and wisdom herself—are means of purification. And those, he adds, who founded the mysteries seem to have had a real meaning when they said of old in a figure that he who arrives in the world below uninitiated and unsanctified shall lie in the mire; but that he who has been purified and sanctified by initiation shall dwell with the gods. For “many,” as they say in the mysteries, “are the Thyrsus-bearers, but few are the mystics,”<sup>1</sup> meaning thereby, as I suppose, none other than those who have followed wisdom rightly. And so that I may be reckoned of their number, I, according to my ability, have left nothing undone during my life, but in every way have striven earnestly, whether I have striven aright and accomplished anything, I shall know clearly, if it please God, when I arrive there in a little while now. This is my defence, dear Simmias and Cebes, the reason why I do not grieve nor repine at leaving you and my masters in this world, for I believe that there I shall find masters no less good and friends also. But the many do not believe this, and if I have spoken more convincingly to you than to my Athenian judges I shall have succeeded well.

**The Hope of Immortality.**—After Socrates has thus spoken Cebes replies (*Phædo*, 69 C. *et seq.*): “I agree in almost everything that you have said, Socrates, but as to what concerns the soul, great doubts exist among men. They fear lest, when the soul is released from the body, she should cease to be, and, in the day wherein the man dies, should be destroyed and perish. What if immediately on being set free and issuing forth from the body, she should be dispersed like air or smoke and vanish into nothingness? If the soul could only be gathered together into herself after she is released from all those evils which you have enumerated, there would indeed be good reason to hope that what you have been saying is true. But there seems to be still wanting not a few proofs and grounds of encouragement for the belief that after a man is dead, his soul continues to live and possesses strength and wisdom.”

Here Cebes is simply expressing the thoughts of most of the cultivated men of his day. The masses of the people if they reflected at all on the subject, clung tenaciously to the teaching of the mysteries; but a one-sided philosophy had inflicted this injury amongst others, that it had unsettled a simple and reasonable belief without offering anything whatsoever in its place. The Platonic Socrates, therefore, acknowledges at once that Cebes is right, so far—the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, he implies, is of paramount importance, it must of necessity be re-examined in a clearer light and re-stated, if thinking men are to accept it as a foundation of morality and practice and a ground of hope in death; and accordingly, to this investigation he at once addresses himself, endeavouring by every means in his power to place the great question on a sound philosophical basis.

The arguments he brings forward are four in number. To reproduce them in detail would require much more space than we have at our disposal. All we can attempt here, therefore, is a very brief analysis, interspersed with such references to other dialogues as shall suffice to make Plato's conceptions of this great subject clear as a whole. To the four arguments of the *Phædo* then it will be necessary to add a fifth from later works. Plato's ideas concerning the soul and immortality, like his conceptions of God, did not stand still, and the fact that his arguments mainly sufficed to support the faith and hope of

<sup>1</sup> *Of.* the words of the Master: “Many are called, but few chosen.”



thoughtful men until the appearance of Him who brought the true immortality to light, invests them with exceeding interest.<sup>1</sup>

1. *The Physical Proof, or Argument from Nature.*—Plato's first argument is founded essentially on the Heracleitean doctrine of generation from opposites (p. 560). There is a continual alternation of increase and decrease, of waxing and waning, he says, going on in and around us—the greater is produced from the less, and in its turn becomes less; waking glides imperceptibly into sleeping, sleeping into waking; winter into spring, spring into winter; life passes into death, death into life again. If this continual "repayment" did not take place, we should have to acknowledge that nature is cause. But nature is not cause. She moves steadily in a circle of perpetual compensation, of perpetual giving and receiving back again. If this were not so—if she moved in a straight line, and did not bend round to her opposite—all at length would take the same form and share the same fate. Nature must inevitably cease to bring forth. "If everything died that partakes of life, and being dead remained in that condition and never came to life again, would not the result of necessity in the end be this—that everything would be swallowed up of death?"

Thus (reasoning from analogy) we maintain that as life passes into death and death into life again, so it must be with souls. As the old saga declares—they go down to the realm of the dead from this world and return hither into life again.

The argument from the analogy of nature as re-stated by Socrates is accepted by his hearers without difficulty. It was in fact in its main features no new doctrine to any Greek. Centuries before Plato it had been set forth in the mysteries—first in the Eleusinian, later in those which shielded themselves under the venerable name of the mythical Orpheus. The beautiful mythos which formed the basis of the mysteries of Eleusis, one of the most touching and significant of the myths of Hellas,<sup>2</sup> is simply a nature parable, from which the grand truth of a life beyond the grave had gradually been evolved. No religious observances had such a hold upon the Greeks as those of Eleusis. The more other elements of the popular religion were abandoned, the more persistently did the faith of the people cling to this, the one hope left to them. The interpreters of the Eleusinian mythos seem, so far as their teaching is known, to have confined themselves to the legitimate use of parable and analogy—they did not press it too far. The yearly return of Cora the daughter to her sorrowing mother, Demeter (Ge-meter = Mother-earth), a personification of the joyous awakening of the life of vegetation in the spring time, appears to have been regarded simply as symbolising the new life that awaits the soul after the winter of death. So far all is legitimate and intelligible. Other teachers of the people, however, were not content with this. In the Orphic mysteries the analogy from nature was pressed further, and the life of the soul after death was depicted in the similitude of that "circle" in which nature works, life passing into death, death sending forth life again in ever new and varied forms. In like manner, the soul also had its

<sup>1</sup> For much that follows we are indebted to Steinhart's able Introduction to Müller's Translation of the *Phædo*. If we cannot altogether agree with Steinhart that the proofs stand logically "on one another's shoulders," yet undoubtedly he has done much to bring out clearly the connecting links between them.

<sup>2</sup> The story of Cora-Persephone, the maiden "like to a rosebud," snatched away whilst plucking a narcissus (the flower of death) by Hades, the King of Terrors, and forced to dwell with him against her will as his bride in the realms of death during the wintry months, returning to light and joy again in the life of every spring time—forms the subject of the so-called Homeric Hymn to Demeter ascribed to Eumolpus, the mythical founder of the mysteries.

cycle, wherein it passed through death into a new body and from one body to another.

There is no absolute necessity for supposing that this doctrine of metempsychosis or the transmigration of souls was borrowed by the Greeks from the East. Undoubtedly it may have been so borrowed, as we have seen from early times Greece was in very close touch with the East. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the Greeks were observers quite keen enough to elaborate the doctrine for themselves, and in the observation of nature the religious preceded the philosophical application of facts. The Eleusinian mysteries existed centuries before the date assigned to Pythagoras, who is generally supposed to have introduced the doctrine of transmigration into Greece. When, precisely, the Orphic mysteries arose is not known, but they also preceded Pythagoras. Still, in whatever way it was developed, or by whomsoever it may have been introduced—the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, which strikes us as so extraordinary, would seem to be only the necessary result of the analogy from nature pushed beyond legitimate limits—natural life moves in a circle—*ergo*, so does soul-life. At the period when the doctrine was evolved the Greeks had not as yet worked their way to the conception of spirit as distinct from matter, consequently they could not yet see that as spirit stands above matter, the supernatural or spiritual life cannot be reckoned with entirely on the analogy of the natural life. The grand idea of the absolute distinctness and independence of spirit, due, in its first inception, to Anaxagoras, in its development to Plato, was wanting to the first inquirers. Their notion of the soul was purely materialistic. In that first period of undeveloped philosophy, says Steinhart, the power of the spirit over nature was not as yet recognised, the *Ur-elements* alone were considered imperishable; out of them proceeded, to them returned, life in all its manifestations. It is plain, therefore, that the immortality of the spirit and the conscious continuance of the *individual*, as a spirit endowed with reason, were not compatible with this view. All that could be claimed from the analogy of nature was that in the soul-cycle *nothing would be lost*, any more than in the circle of nature. Even to have made this clear, however, was a gain to the hearers of Socrates, inasmuch as it refuted at once the popular objection brought forward by Cebes, that the soul could vanish like air or smoke into nothingness. The early Greeks saw, and Heracleitus formulated the doctrine, that nothing in nature is ever really lost—they knew that what is called “death” is simply matter decomposing itself out of one shape in order to recompose itself into another. We know that a constant process of analysis and synthesis is going on, in which death ministers to life. Death takes place, matter decays, the elements are set free, oxygen to become the life of animals, carbonic acid the life of plants, which in their turn supply the wants of animals. If the Greeks could not explain the why or the wherefore, they knew at least that the process did take place, and the first argument of Socrates simply amounts to this, that even from the materialistic standpoint, the soul cannot be *lost*. If the argument appealed to Greeks from their scientific point of view, how should it affect us from our present standpoint—the standpoint which recognises as facts the conservation of energy and the correlation of forces? If the humble elements of matter, the slave of mind, can never be lost, can it be admitted that mind, the grandest of all the forces, that which controls the rest, can be lost or cease to exist? Impossible!

But going back once more to the earliest use of the argument from nature—the view which was content to take nature in all her beauty simply as a type and symbol, we need not be surprised to find this very same view



treasured up in that storehouse of things new and old of all that is true and tender and touching—our own Scriptures, and stamped with the seal of the Master, He who said, “Gather up the fragments *that nothing be lost*,” was pleased to take that deep and true parable of Eleusis and apply it to Himself. It was on the one occasion when He is recorded to have met *Greeks*—Greeks who, as Welcker points out, must have been familiar with the teaching of Eleusis—that our Lord put forth His parable of the seed-corn as a type of Himself: “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.”<sup>1</sup> It is to *Greeks* also—and neither to Romans nor to Hebrews—that St. Paul addresses his grand argument for the Resurrection.<sup>2</sup>

These thoughts link us on in sympathy to the little band of eager listeners gathered round the dying Socrates, as they knit us in faith to the dying CHRIST.

2. *The Psychological Proof or Argument from a certain capacity of the Soul.*—The second argument (*Phædo*, 72 E. *et seq.*) is founded on the Platonic doctrine of recollection, and is brought forward by none other than Cebes himself—the hardest of all men to convince—the mover (as we remember) of the first objection against the immortality of the soul. The earnestness of Socrates, however, has as usual struck fire, and Cebes now in his turn bethinks him that if the doctrine of “Recollection” is true, if knowledge is nothing else than reminiscence, then on that supposition we must have learnt what we now recollect at some former time, and that would be impossible unless our soul existed somewhere before she came into this human form. So that from this reasoning also, he concludes, “the soul would seem to be something immortal.”

Simmias asks for proofs. What reason is there for supposing that knowledge is nothing but the recollection of something which we have seen in a former state of existence? Cebes reminds him of the proof advanced in the *Meno*, viz. that if questions be put in the right way to a person ignorant of a science—geometry is the example given—the correctness of his answers will often be such as to surprise the questioner.

In the *Meno*, Socrates is represented as demonstrating this practically on a slave-boy from whom he elicits by questioning some elementary geometrical truths. How had the boy acquired this information? Had any one taught him geometry? Certainly not. *Meno*, his master, can vouch for that, inasmuch as the boy was born and brought up in his house. Then the conclusion is that he must have learned it in a former life before he was born into this world, and the skilful questioning of Socrates has awakened the slumbering remembrance of it in his mind. Thus not only what we call Divine truth, but every kind of knowledge, was included in the scope of the doctrine of recollection, and Plato’s enthusiasm for it in his earlier days was unbounded.<sup>3</sup>

One passage in the *Meno* is so important for our purpose, not only as giving the first account of “recollection,” but as Plato’s first clear utterance on the subject of immortality, that we must transcribe it here in full. Plato takes his start from the doctrine of the transmigration of souls as already known and taught by the poets and in the orphic mysteries:—

“I have heard,” he says (*Meno*, 81), “from certain wise men and women Divine things—things true, so it seems to me, and glorious. Some of them were priests and priestesses, who had studied to be able to give a reason for the things which they practised, and Pindar also has the same saying, and

<sup>1</sup> St. John xii. 24.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Corinthians xv.

<sup>3</sup> The doctrine of recollection, although attributed here to Socrates, is nowhere mentioned in the earliest of Socrates’ Dialogues, and it becomes less prominent in Plato’s later works.

many other Divine poets. And what they tell us is this, that the soul of man is immortal, and at one time has an end which they call dying, and at another is born again, but never perishes. And the lesson of this is that men ought always to be leading lives of perfect holiness.

"Souls from whom Persephone has accepted the penalty of old crime she giveth back to the upper world and the sunlight in the ninth year, and from them go forth noble kings and men great in might and wisdom, and these are hailed by after ages as sacred heroes.

"Seeing, then, that the soul is immortal, and born many times, and has beheld all things both here and in the world below, there is nothing that she has not learned, so that it is not to be wondered at, if she is able to recollect things which she knew before concerning virtue and other matters. For as all nature is allied and the soul has learned all things, there is nothing to prevent her, when one thing alone has been remembered—that which men call "learning"—from finding out everything else for herself, if she seeks courageously and without weariness. For all seeking and learning is but recollection. We must not, therefore, yield to the sophistical argument (that it is impossible to find out the truth), for it will make us indolent and is pleasant to the ears of the sluggard, whereas this saying will make us *workers and seekers after truth.*"

The doctrine of recollection in its connection with immortality therefore seemed to Plato a key that would ultimately unlock all truth (*Meno*, 85): "If the truth of all things is always in the soul," he says, "the soul must be immortal. Wherefore be of good cheer, and try to find out what you do not know, that is, what you do not remember—it will come back to you."

In the *Phædo*, however, Plato goes a step further and spiritualises the teaching of the *Meno*, for he bases the argument not on the remembrance of anything and everything which the soul may have seen in a previous state of existence, but on the remembrance of the IDEAS, those eternal *urbilder*, the original types of earthly things. The reasoning is (*Phædo*, 76 D.) that if the absolute beauty and goodness existed before we were born, so also did our souls, for they then beheld that which is *remembered* here when the sight of the earthly copy awakens within us a *recollection* of the heavenly reality.

The reader will recollect in his turn that we have already met with this doctrine of recollection in its most beautiful and pregnant form in the mythos of *The Soul and its Wings* (p. 573). There "recollection" appears as the faculty of *thought*, as that which distinguishes man from the beasts. We call to mind the picture of the life of the soul before birth, when it lived with the gods and was allowed to follow in their train and accompany them to the heavenly feast—to drive its chariot with the ill-matched steeds up the steep ascent of heaven, there to take its stand upon the outermost ridge and behold in the realm of true being (the presence of God) the Divine verities—the absolute justice, truth, beauty, knowledge—those realities of which earthly things are but a shadowy copy and image. We recollect also that any soul, even although it should afterwards fail, and, through the fault of the charioteer, reason, or of its troublesome mortal steed, break its wing; yet, if it had succeeded in getting but a glimpse of the Divine realities, that soul, when it fell to earth, *could pass into no other form save that of man, the upward-looker.* Why? Because it had looked upon God, true being—it had fed in the plain of truth upon His Divine attributes, the ideas, justice, beauty, righteousness, knowledge, and had thus become capable of "recollecting" them, and of recognising them in the feeble earthly images wherein it might afterwards see them reflected as in a glass darkly upon earth.



This is Plato's doctrine of "recollection" in its highest, grandest form. Man is man and not mere animal, because he can grasp in thought and aspiration the great realities which are apprehended by mind alone, not by the animal senses; and every such thought and aspiration is a "reminiscence" of the things that he saw and knew when he himself lived with the blessed before his soul was shut up in the tomb of the body "like an oyster in its shell."

Has, then, Plato's doctrine of recollection any real value as a proof of the immortal nature of the soul? Most certainly, if for the word recollection we substitute such terms as "elements of judgment laid up within us," "latent capacities," "slumbering faculties," "divine intuitions," "power to apprehend the Divine." We still maintain with Plato that the power to apprehend, if not to com-prehend, God is that which distinguishes man *quâd* man, and marks him off from the brute. A soul that can rise to the "recollection" or apprehension of the absolute—the perfect righteousness, wisdom, beauty—is separated from the brutes by a gulf that can never be bridged over.

3. *The Ontological Proof or Argument from the Nature of the Soul.*—The argument from "recollection," however, as Socrates' hearers speedily point out, has only proved the half of what was to be proved—it shows, if accepted, that the soul existed before birth, but we still want proof that the soul will go on existing after death" (*Phædo*, 77 B. *et seq.*).

Socrates thinks that this has been demonstrated by the first proof of the circle of life, taken in conjunction with the second proof of the capacity of the soul. Cebes and Simmias seem to him (he adds, with a touch of the old humour) like children who imagine that, if they happen to die in weather which is not perfectly calm, their soul may be dispersed and blown away by the gale.

Cebes laughs: "Then try to persuade us aright, dear Socrates," he says, "or, rather, speak to us as though there were among us a child whom we would fain persuade not to fear death like a hob-goblin."

Thus urged, Socrates applies himself once more to the argument, and this time the proof he advances is drawn from the nature of the soul. We must inquire, he says, as to whether it belongs to the things that are likely to be dispersed or not—and hope or fear accordingly. Well, then, let us ask:—

(a) Which things are most likely to be broken up and "dispersed"—things which are "composite" in their nature, made up of diverse elements, or things which are not composite, but simple and homogeneous in their natures? Naturally, it is the "composite" things which can readily be separated again into the parts from which they were compounded at the first.

(b) Then, again, does it not seem most natural that those things which are always the same and unchanging are the things which are not composite; whilst, on the other hand, those things which are constantly changing (growing old and passing away), and are now in this condition, now in that, belong to the composite (and "dispersable") class?—"It seems so to me, at least," says Cebes.

Then to go back upon those great subjects which we have just been discussing—true existence, absolute beauty (justice-in-itself, truth-in-itself)—can we suppose that these things ever change, even in the very slightest degree—impossible! Naturally, then, such things must be "simple" and abiding in their nature.

But, on the other hand, think of the many beautiful things—the relatively beautiful, as opposed to the absolute—such as men, or horses, or garments, or anything of the sort—are they always the same? Clearly not; they are constantly changing, and so belong to the class of varying and composite and "dispersable" things.

And then again, these things which are always changing, do we not discern them by the help of the senses? Can we not see them and touch them? But the things which are always the same and unchanging, can they be discerned in any other way than by the power of thought? Are not such things invisible and not seen?

"What you say is perfectly true," assents Cebes.

(c) Well, then—we must assume two classes of existences—the visible and the invisible. Things invisible, like the absolute beauty, are unchanging and apprehended only by the power of thought; things visible, like the many beautiful things, are always changing and are apprehended by the senses—they may be seen, touched, felt.

(d) Now, let us apply the foregoing to body and soul. Which class does the body resemble, and to which is it most akin? Does not the body belong to the visible class (of composite, changing objects, which may be seen, touched, handled)—most certainly. And how about the soul? Herself invisible, with which class has she most affinity—the visible and changing, or the invisible and unchanging? Think of the soul as we thought of her a little while ago, gathered up into herself—not accepting the help of the bodily senses, for these only mislead and deceive her—but inquiring by and for herself—and holding communion with the pure, and the eternal, and the unchanging, and the undying, as though she were akin to these, and had found rest with them from her wanderings—think of the soul in this her faculty of thought, and then say which class she resembles, and to which she is most akin.

"Every one must admit," says Cebes heartily, "even the dullest who has followed this mode of reasoning, that the soul resembles entirely and in every way *that which changes not, that which is always the same*"—the eternal.

(e) Then, again, continues Socrates, consider this—soul and body are indeed joined together, yet has not nature appointed the latter to serve and obey, the former to command and rule? Now in this relation also which appears to you most to resemble the Divine, which the mortal? Is it not the function of the Divine by nature to rule and lead, of the mortal to serve and obey? Certainly. Now which of these twain does the soul resemble?

"Clearly, oh Socrates," Cebes rejoins, "*the soul is like to the Divine, the body to the mortal.*"

*Summary.*—What must follow, then, from all that has been said is, that the soul most resembles the Divine, and undying, and intelligent, and simple, and indissoluble, and eternally unchangeable in itself—the body, on the contrary, most resembles the human, and mortal, and unintelligent, and composite, and dissoluble, and that which is constantly changing and never the same in itself. Is there any objection to be brought against this? There is none. Then the conclusion is: If it is fitting that the body should be speedily dissolved, it is equally fitting that the soul should be entirely indissoluble, or something approaching to that. The body, the visible part, may be preserved for an indefinitely long period in the visible world by the process of embalming as in Egypt—the soul, the invisible part, goes to a noble and pure abode, invisible like herself, even to Hades the true realm of the unseen,<sup>1</sup> and to the good and wise God—can we believe then that the soul, such being her nature, can on her separation from the body be blown away and perish, as the many say? Impossible!

In the *Republic*—in the allegory of Glaucus, the old sea-god—Plato gives a very beautiful commentary on the proof of immortality as deduced from the

<sup>1</sup> "Hades" means the not-seen, the invisible. The name was applied by the Greeks both to the ruler of the dead and to his kingdom.



nature of the soul. Glaucus, so the story ran, was a fisherman of Anthedon, who had attained unconsciously to an unwelcome and unwished-for bodily immortality. By eating of a certain herb which proved to be the herb Live-for-ever, he found himself impelled to jump into the sea, and encased within a never-dying body, which in course of time became so encrusted and changed that his original form was scarce discernible. Plato compares the soul, imprisoned in the body, to the real human Glaucus in his pitiable metamorphosis: "Just as those who gaze upon the sea-god Glaucus can hardly recognise his original condition (he says, *Rep.*, x. 60) because the natural members of his body are all disfigured by the waves—some broken off and some shattered, whilst other things have grown over them, shells and seaweed and stones, so that he is more like some monster than himself as he was by nature—so now we see the soul marred by ten thousand ills. But there," adds Socrates suddenly as by a Divine intuition, "*there must we look if we would see her real nature.*"

"Where?" asked the startled listener.

**"At her love of Wisdom.**—Consider whom she clings to and with whom she longs to hold converse, as being akin to the Divine and immortal and eternal—and what she might become if she followed this Divine longing wholly, and were carried by her eagerness out of the sea in which she now is, and had stripped off the stones and shells—the earthly stony things—which in wild abundance have now overgrown her, because she nourishes herself upon earth, feasting on the so-called 'good things' of earth."

"If we would understand the real nature of the soul, then, we must examine her with the eye of reason, and see her—not only in her original purity—but in the efforts which she makes to regain that purity, to shake off the earthly encumbrances which weigh her down, that she may rise out of the sea of mortal ill and attain to the haven where she fain would be, even with wisdom, her beloved."

**Two objections are brought forward.**—To return to the *Phædo* (84 C. *et seq.*). After Socrates has ended his third proof, a long silence falls upon the little company. Most of them, including Socrates himself, are occupied in pondering what has been said. Simmias and Cebes, however, seem to be discussing something softly between themselves, and when Socrates perceives this, he asks them if they are not quite satisfied, if they see anything wanting in the argument? and he urges them to speak out, and let him know their whole mind that he may help them, if they will take him into counsel. Thus encouraged, Simmias owns that he and Cebes still have doubts on which they would learn his opinion, but they fear that it might not be agreeable to him to listen to them on account of the present calamity. Simmias and Cebes evidently feel these doubts to be of a nature so terrible, that they would fain leave their old friend in possession of his "good hope" and not endanger his peace of mind in view of the approaching "calamity."

Socrates' reply is very characteristic and very beautiful. He smiles gently as he remarks that it would be hard indeed for him to convince other men that he does not regard his present circumstances as a "calamity," if he has not succeeded in convincing them. They evidently think him a worse prophet than the swans, who sing most and best when they feel they are about to die, for joy that they are going to the god whose servants they are. Men slander the swans, and say that they sing a lament for grief that they must die; but men forget that no bird, not even the nightingale, sings when it is in pain or distress. Socrates thinks rather that being dedicated to Apollo, the god of prophecy, the swans possess the seer's gift, and

beholding beforehand the good things in Hades, they sing and rejoice on the day of death more than in all their life before.

Now Socrates himself is their fellow-servant and consecrated to the same god; the gift of prophecy has been given no less to him by his master, and he departs this life no whit less joyously than the swans. Wherefore let not Cebes and Simmias hesitate to speak and ask him any question they wish—so long as the Eleven allow him to listen.

Both feel that the time is short—if Socrates can solve their doubts, it must be now or never. Accordingly Simmias proceeds to state his difficulty with the touching apology which we have already noticed, that where a steadfast Word of God is wanting, a man must save himself from the waves of doubt by the help of the strongest and most irrefutable human word he can find, and sail on that as on a raft through life. To shirk a difficulty were an unmanly thing; therefore he will not be ashamed to state his.

(a) *The Lyre and its Harmony.*—Simmias' perplexity springs from the doctrine of the Pythagoreans, that the soul is a "harmony" (*Phædo*, 85 B. *et seq.*). He thinks that Socrates' argument regarding body and soul applies with equal force to the relation between a lyre and the harmony which it produces. For the harmony of a well-tuned lyre is, like the soul, something invisible and incorporeal and wondrously beautiful, yea Divine—whilst the lyre itself and its strings are bodies, corporeal and composite and earthly and akin to the mortal. But if the lyre were to be broken or its strings cut asunder, it might be maintained that the harmony, being akin to the immortal, must of necessity still exist somewhere and that it is impossible for it, being so Divine a thing, to perish before the mortal, the wood and strings of the lyre.

That this objection of Simmias is based on a materialistic conception of the soul, he proceeds himself to demonstrate, for he adds, "You know that we hold the soul to be something of the kind. The body may be likened to a stringed instrument, kept together by heat and cold, dryness and moisture, and so forth—whilst the soul is the 'harmony' or mingling together of these elements in due and beautiful proportion. Therefore, if the soul is this kind of harmony, it is clear that—when the body is unstrung or overstrained by disease or any other evil—the soul must necessarily perish, most divine though she be, like the tones of the lyre or any other harmony—whilst the remains of any body may last for a long time, until they are either burned or decay."

Such is Simmias' objection—"Consider now," he says, "what we shall say in reply to any one who maintains that the soul, being a mixture of the bodily elements, must be the first to perish in that which we call 'death.'"

Socrates looked round upon them all, the little eager expectant band, as was his wont, and smiled. Simmias has not grasped the argument badly, he says, but before answering him he would like to hear what Cebes has to say. This will give him time to take counsel with himself as to how he shall best answer both.

(b) *The Old Weaver and his Cloak.*—Cebes' objection is stronger than that of his friend. He will not allow with Simmias that the soul is weaker or less durable than the body. On the contrary, the soul seems to him in all these things to have the advantage. Then (the argument might say) why do you not believe when you see that after death the weaker still continues to exist (as in the case of the embalmed body)? Does it not seem to you that the more permanent must of necessity still be safe and sound somewhere during that time? To answer the argument, Cebes feels that he, like Simmias, must borrow an illustration in order to explain his meaning (*Phædo*, 87 B. *et seq.*). This sort of reasoning, then, appears to Cebes much like that of one who



should point to an old weaver that had died, and argue that because the cloak which the man had woven for himself was still safe and sound, therefore the weaver—being of the genus *Homo* and stronger than the cloak—must also probably still be in existence somewhere, safe and sound, since what was weaker than himself had not perished. But just consider this, continues Cebes; the weaver, it is true, is not weaker than his cloak, for during his lifetime he has woven for himself many such cloaks and worn them out, every one—*except the last*. Now, he adds, the same figure may, I think, be transferred to the relation of soul and body. For in like manner it may be said that every soul wears out many bodies, especially if she lives many years. For if we admit that the body is in perpetual flux, continually decaying even during the life of the man, and as continually being re woven and renewed by the indwelling soul—yet at last this must necessarily follow, that when the soul herself decays, *she has woven her last garment*, and must perish before that, for it is not till the soul has perished that the body shows the nature of its weakness and falls into decay. So, on this reasoning, we cannot yet be confident or believe that our soul after death still exists somewhere. For even if we admit that the soul not only exists before birth (as Socrates declares), but that after death it will continue to exist and be born again and die many times—for such is its strength by nature that it may outlast many births—yet we must also admit this, that the soul may suffer in its many births, and at last, in one of its deaths may perish utterly.

In this sense also it may weave its last garment. But *when* that death and that dissolution of the body which will bring destruction to the soul shall be, no man may say, for such knowledge is not possible to any one of us. Wherefore, Cebes concludes, if these things are so, it beseems no man to be over-confident in death, or to cherish a foolish hope, for he is not able to prove that his soul is wholly immortal or indestructible. And if he cannot do that, then the man who is about to die must always be in fear concerning his soul, lest in the separation from the body it be utterly destroyed.

There is nothing more pathetic in the whole range of literature than the consternation which falls upon the little group when Simmias and Cebes have ended their demonstrations (*Phædo*, 88 B. *et seq.*). It affects ourselves to this day in the simple narrative of *Phædo*; the hope which the strong confident reasoning of Socrates had raised to a certainty is dashed to the ground, and the intensity of the despair is heightened by the circumstances—for every moment is bringing their beloved teacher and friend nearer, not to the glorious immortality which he fondly foresees, but to—annihilation. No sooner has the sun gone down than all that is left of Socrates will be the broken instrument that once discoursed music so sweet, dumb and mute, with its cords snapt in twain. They will be able, indeed, for a little while to gaze upon the garment that had veiled the beautiful soul, but the soul itself, the old weaver, where will it be? Will that most Divine thing, strong in its confidence of life and the living God, indeed be blown away and dispersed like an empty nothing?

Some such thoughts as these seem to have fallen with crushing weight on Socrates' disciples. If *his* reasoning could be thus refuted, what argument could henceforth be worthy of credence? And they themselves who had put faith in this reasoning, how foolish they felt! Could they henceforth trust themselves as fit judges in any argument whatsoever?

But Socrates—what of him? Does he appear weighed down or disconcerted by this change in the situation, or does he calmly come to the rescue of his argument when he hears the battle-cry?

Phædo shall tell us. He had often admired Socrates before, he says, but never more than now. The old philosopher had listened pleasantly and kindly and even admiringly to the reasoning of the young men, but now—perceiving in a moment the impression made by it upon the others, the wave of despondency which is sweeping over the circle—like a brave general, he immediately calls back his defeated and retreating troops, forces them to turn, to follow him, to face the argument, and—to conquer. In a word, to use another of Phædo's similes—he *healed* them.

But how? There is no haste, no vehemence. He that believeth shall not make haste, and Socrates quietly allows the first excitement to subside before he enters upon any refutation of the objections. Phædo, the beloved disciple, happens to be sitting on a low stool at the right hand of the master to whom, so the story runs, he owes his freedom. Socrates gently strokes the head of the youth, as though by the action he would soothe and infuse into him his own calmness—and says as he gathers back the clustering locks, playing with them as was his wont: "To-morrow, Phædo, you will probably cut off this beautiful hair."

"Of course I shall, dear Socrates."

"Not if you listen to me," rejoins Socrates.

"Why not?"

"We will do it to-day," says Socrates. "Both you and I will shear our locks for very grief if the argument dies and we cannot call it back to life again. And if I were in your place, and the argument escaped me, I would vow like the Argives not to let my hair grow again until I had renewed the fight with Simmias and Cebes, and my argument had won the day."

"Two against one," rejoins Phædo; "they say that Heracles himself was not equal to *that* encounter!"

"Then so long as the daylight lasts, call me like Iolaus to your help."

"That I will," says Phædo; "I certainly will call you to my help, but let us reverse the story. I, Iolaus, call you *Heracles*!"

And so in the most natural and beautiful way, serenity is recovered. Surely, Socrates could never jest or speak in this light and playful manner unless, indeed, he were a very Heracles, and had in reserve an invincible weapon, wherewith to demolish utterly this many-headed Hydra that assailed the argument.

A few preliminary words are next spoken (*Phædo*, 89 C. *et seq.*)—ostensibly to the youthful Phædo, but meant for the others—warning him against a certain great danger which Socrates sees ahead, the danger of becoming a hater of inquiry (*miso-logos* = a hater of reason). There can, perhaps, no greater evil befall a man, says Socrates, than this hatred of inquiry. But *misologia*, the hatred of inquiry, springs up in the same way as does *misanthropia*, the hatred of mankind. For misanthropy insinuates itself into a man who has trusted some one too much without possessing sufficient knowledge; he has believed him to be true and sound and faithful, and then a little later has discovered him to be the very reverse. When a man has experienced this several times, and especially among those whom he deemed his nearest and dearest friends, he ends by hating all men and believing that there is nothing sound in any one. And is not that a hateful mistake, and is it not clear that the hater of his fellow-men is one who has undertaken to deal with men without the necessary knowledge of human nature? . . . And so it is with the hater of inquiry. Because an argument in which a man had put faith after a while seems to him (rightly or wrongly) to be false, and then another, and another—he loses faith in all. And you know, continues Socrates, that it



is just those that make a business of finding proofs of contradictory arguments<sup>1</sup> who suppose that they have attained to highest wisdom, and that they alone have the penetration to see that there is nothing sound or stable in anything or any reasoning, but that all things that exist are just like the ebb and flow of the Euripus, tossing up and down, and never abiding any time in the same place.<sup>2</sup>

"And would it not be justifiable, Phædo," continues Socrates earnestly, "if, when a true and trustworthy proof exists and is within reach, a man should nevertheless miss it, because he has chanced to light upon certain of these arguments which appear now true, now false, and should not see that he himself and his own want of discernment are at fault, but at length from sheer vexation should gladly throw the blame from himself upon the reasoning, and thenceforth go through life hating and reviling inquiry, and deprived of real truth and knowledge?"

"By heaven!" rejoins Phædo, "that were indeed a pitiable case—a case, let us note, which is by no means rare at the present day. How many of ourselves, because one link in a chain of reasoning is suspected, instead of blaming our own lack of penetration, hastily throw up the inquiry and persuade ourselves that truth exists nowhere—truth all the while standing patiently at our side, ready to reveal herself if we will but be manly enough to continue the search!"

"Therefore, and first of all," says the manliest of thinkers, "we will be on our guard against the supposition that there is no sound reasoning, and not allow such a thought to enter our mind. We will believe rather that it is we ourselves who have not yet attained to soundness. We must be courageous and zealous—you and the others for the sake of your whole remaining life, I by reason of my approaching death."

This is the attitude of the true seeker after truth.

By these considerations the listeners are brought to feel with Socrates himself that he that believeth—in the existence of an absolute truth and of its being within our reach—will not make haste, and are disposed to continue the inquiry patiently and calmly.

Socrates now takes up the thread of the discussion, prefacing it with one of the true "Socratic" touches with which the dialogue—Platonic though it be—abounds. "If you will take my advice, dear Simmias and Cebes," he says, "you will concern yourself little about Socrates, but all the more about the truth. If I seem to you to say anything true, agree with me; but if not, oppose me with every argument in your power, lest in my zeal I should deceive myself and you, and, like the bee, leave my sting in you—when I depart."

**Socrates refutes the Objections.**—Now, he says (91 C. *et seq.*), let us get to work. Simmias does not believe, because he fears that the soul, although more Divine and more beautiful than the body, must—inasmuch as it is of the nature of a harmony—perish before the latter. Here all depends upon the truthfulness of the analogy—but—can the soul indeed be compared to a harmony? Socrates disproves this in three ways:—

(a) *Firstly, by the Doctrine of Recollection.*—This Simmias and Cebes have both accepted. They believe that the soul which comes into the world with "recollections" (what we now term "intuitions") so Divine, must needs have learned them in some previous state—consequently, that she existed *before* she came into the form and body of a man. How, then, can she be compared to a

<sup>1</sup> The Sophists and Eristics.

<sup>2</sup> The tides of the Euripus, the strait between Boeotia and the island of Eubœa, were supposed to change seven times in the twenty-four hours.

harmony? Must not the body of the harmony, the lyre and its strings, necessarily be in existence before the "soul," the harmony itself, can be produced? The analogy therefore fails on the first count, for the soul—"harmony" exists before its body.

(b) *Secondly, from a consideration of the essential nature of a harmony.*—A harmony can never be inharmonious, in so far as it is a harmony—*ein-klang* is not *miss-klang*—unison is not dissonance. But in the soul there is a dissonance, viz. vice. Therefore, here again the analogy fails.

(c) *Thirdly, and chiefly—look at the relation of soul and body.*—Is there anything appertaining to man that rules in him except the soul? Nothing. But how does the soul rule in him? By yielding to the impulses of the body, or by resisting them? Just think. When a man is hot and thirsty, does not the soul draw him to the opposite of what he longs for, and forbid him to drink, and when he is hungry, does she not forbid him to eat; and so on, in a thousand other ways do we not see the soul opposing the body?<sup>1</sup> But if the soul were a harmony, the very reverse would be the case; she would never raise her voice in opposition to the elements of which she is composed—the tightening, and relaxing, and quivering of the strings—she would follow these, not lead them. But the soul does the opposite, for she leads the elements out of which (so some say) she is composed, and well-nigh all through life she sets herself in opposition to them and rules every mood—sometimes chastening by stricter discipline and by pain (as in gymnastic and medicine)—sometimes restraining by gentler measures, admonishing and threatening the desires and impulses and fears, as though she herself were another person addressing somebody else. Thus Homer in the *Odyssey* (xx. 17, 18) says of Odysseus:—

"But he smote his breast and rebuked his heart with the words:  
Endure my heart! far worse hast thou endured before!"

Do you think Homer would have written that if he had regarded the soul as a "harmony" made to be led by the impulses of the body, and not rather as made to lead these and govern them, and comparable to something far more Divine than any harmony?

"By Heaven!" says Simmias, "I do not think he would."

"Then, my friend," pursues Socrates, "in no way whatsoever can we declare the soul to be a 'harmony,' for by so doing we should neither be in accordance with the Divine poet, Homer, nor yet with our own selves—for the simple reason that each of us knows the soul to be the leading and determining power within us."

Both Simmias and Cebes acknowledge themselves perfectly satisfied, and Socrates then addresses himself to the more weighty objection of Cebes, viz.: that the soul—although in existence before the body, and superior to it in every way—may yet, after having worn out many bodies, herself succumb and perish. This possibility of the soul's being after all destructible, Socrates answers in a magnificent argument.

4. **The Dialectical Proof—The Soul as the Life-Bearer.**—Plato's concluding argument is based on the great doctrine of ideas. With this we are already tolerably familiar (see *ante*, p. 563). We know Plato's belief that all earthly things have a heavenly prototype—that there exists a something which is the spiritual essence of each—the absolute thing-in-itself. In the *Phædo* (100 B. *et seq.*) Plato lays down what we may call two great "laws" concerning these essences or ideas.

<sup>1</sup> See the passage from the *Republic*, p. 579.



(a) The first is that the earthly thing is what its name implies—beautiful, good, just—only by participation in its own essence or idea. Take beauty as an example: “It is evident to me,” says Socrates, “that if there is anything beautiful besides beauty—in itself—that thing is beautiful from no other cause than because it shares in the absolute beauty . . . nothing else makes it beautiful except the presence of the absolute beauty or communion with the latter.”

(b) *Plato's second “law” is that the absolute can never receive its opposite.*—Otherwise it would cease to be the absolute, the essence. The concrete earthly things run into and are generated from their opposites, as we saw in the first proof of the circle of life. But the essence or principles of these things will never receive their opposites, and this is a distinction which it is necessary to hold fast. Let us make it clear by an illustration: There is one thing which we term heat and another which we term cold, and there are things which we call fire and snow. But are heat and cold the same as fire and snow? Certainly not. Heat and cold, then, are essences and opposites, and being such they will never receive or admit one another. To pursue our illustration, snow may be melted, but is the principle of cold thereby destroyed? No; it has simply retired at the advance of its opposite, heat, and is still in existence somewhere. In like manner, fire may be put out, but heat is not destroyed—it has simply retreated, because it could not admit its opposite, cold.

These two “laws” once mastered, we have no difficulty in following Socrates in the application of the reasoning:—

(a) The ideas are essences which communicate the property that is peculiarly their own to earthly things.

(b) The ideas will never receive their opposites.

The soul itself is now shown to be an essence, an essential principle, for (a) she too has something to communicate peculiarly her own; (b) she, too, will not receive the opposite of her own essential nature.

*Question.* Tell me, says Socrates (*Phædo*, 105 C. *et seq.*), what is that the in-coming of which will render a body alive?

*Answer.* The soul.

*Question.* And is this always the case?

*Answer.* Certainly.

*Question.* Then whatever the soul takes possession of, to that she comes bringing LIFE?

*Answer.* Assuredly she does.

*Question.* And is there any opposite to LIFE?

*Answer.* There is, said Cebes.

*Question.* What?

*Answer.* DEATH.

*Question.* And the soul will never, as has been acknowledged, receive the opposite of that which she brings?

*Answer.* Most certainly not, said Cebes. . . .

*Question.* And what do we call that which does not receive or admit of death?

*Answer.* The immortal.

*Question.* And the soul, the LIFE-bringer, will not admit of death?

*Answer.* No.

*Question.* Then the soul is immortal. Shall we take this as proven?

*Answer.* Yea, O Socrates, says Cebes, as abundantly proven.

And if the soul is immortal, then she is also imperishable. Just as the essential principle, heat, retires at the approach of its opposite, cold, so does

the essential principle, life, of which the soul is the bearer, withdraw at the approach of death. "When death comes upon a man, the mortal part of him, as is natural, dies; but the immortal hastens away, retiring before death, and is preserved safe and sound. Therefore unquestionably, O Cebes, the soul is immortal and indestructible, and our souls will truly exist in another world—even in Hades, the unseen.

*To sum up.*—In the first proof, Plato reasons from the circle of life. In the second, from the Divine intuitions of the soul, its power to "recollect," *i.e.* perceive, the Divine. In the third he infers from the nature of the soul, that it is a simple non-composite, invisible essence, able to hold communion with the immortal, to rule the mortal and hence akin to the Divine. In the fourth he proves that to whatever it comes it is the bearer of LIFE, and hence that it cannot admit or receive its opposite death.

To this grand chain must now be added the argument from the *Phædrus* (245 C. *et seq.*) of the soul as the self-moving—an argument re-stated again in the *Laws* (x. 894 C. *et seq.*).

**The Soul Immortal because Self-moving.**—The whole soul, says Plato, is immortal, for that which is ever in motion is immortal, but that which moves another, and is moved by another, in ceasing to move, ceases to live. Only that which is self-moving—in that it does not forsake itself—never ceases to move, and is also the fountain and beginning of motion to all other things that move.

Now the beginning is unbegotten, for all that is must of necessity be begotten from a beginning; but the beginning itself is begotten of nothing, for if it were begotten of anything, it would not be a beginning.

And since it is unbegotten, it is of necessity imperishable. For if the beginning were destroyed, it could neither itself ever be begotten of anything, nor anything else of it, for all things must come from the beginning.

Therefore, the beginning of motion is the self-moving, and this can neither be destroyed nor begotten, otherwise all heaven and the whole creation must collapse and stand still, and never again have motion or birth.

And if the immortality of the self-moving is proved, no one who maintains that self-motion is the very essence of the soul need be ashamed. For every body moved from without is soul-less (*a-psychon*), but that which is moved from within, of itself, is in-dwelt of soul (*em-psychon*)—and such is the nature of the soul. And if this be true—that nothing is self-moving except the soul—then, of necessity, must not the soul be unbegotten and undying? Touching immortality itself, he concludes, this suffices.

May we not look upon the whole argument of the Hellene as a most noble commentary on the declaration of the Hebrew, that the Lord God breathed into man the breath of life, and man became a LIVING SOUL—immortal, imperishable, self-moving, self-determining, able to hold communion with the Divine, because itself an emanation from the Divine source of life—of movement, mind, power?

**Practical Conclusions.**—His philosophical reasoning Plato follows up with the intensely practical conclusion: If these things are so, what manner of men ought we to be? (*Phædo*, 107 B., C.). If the soul is indeed immortal, it is not for the present time which we call "life" alone that care should be taken, but for the whole,<sup>1</sup> and the danger which a man runs by neglecting this appears to be awful. For if death were a release from *everything*, then the wicked would be gainers by it, for when they die they would be freed not only

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the passage from the *Republic*, p. 580.



from the body, but, with the soul, from their own wickedness. But now, since it is clear that the soul is immortal, since it is clear (as he says in the *Republic*, 610 E.) that the soul cannot be destroyed either by evil in itself or evil coming upon it from without—then it is equally clear that there can be no other way of escape or salvation from evil except by becoming as good and wise as possible. For the soul arrives in the other world possessed of nothing but *her education and nurture*, and these, he says, may bring to the departed at the beginning of its new career the greatest benefit or the reverse.

**The World-Order.**—It is the thought that the man takes his character with him—that as he *is*,—that as he has made himself so he will arrive in the other world—which gives such grandeur to the philosophy of Plato. He is pleading earnestly for certain convictions and a certain course of conduct, because they have reference not to this little span of life, but to the great whole which we call eternity. And thinking of this life in its relation to eternity, he looks on and contemplates that magnificent *world-order* of which every soul, however insignificant, necessarily forms part, since it is immortal. It cannot be stamped out of existence, but must have its connection with the world-order, so that on its conformity or nonconformity to *that* will depend the great hereafter.

“This is the aim for which we should live,” he says in the *Gorgias* (507 D. *et seq.*). “To this we should direct all our striving, both our own and that of the state—so to act that righteousness and wisdom may be with us, and bring us to happiness—not leading the lives of pirates, giving the rein to passion, and endeavouring to serve it—an endless, aimless misery. For one who lives thus is loved neither by God nor man—with such an one it is impossible to have intercourse or friendship. For wise men say that heaven and earth and gods and men are bound together by mutual intercourse (*koinonia* = fellowship, communion) and by friendship, and good order and wisdom, and justice; and the great whole, by reason of this, they call the *Kosmos*, the World-Order—not disorder or licence. Hence he whose soul is undisciplined is shut out, by this very fact, from communion with *God*.”

**The Judgment.**—Inseparably connected with the world-order is the idea of a future judgment, or sifting, when the good will be openly recognised and take their place as a natural and necessary part of the world-harmony—when also the evil will be unveiled, and either submitted to the purification which will rid them of all that is alien to that harmony, or if they be past remedy—rejected altogether.

This judgment, this sifting is simply the working out of that great natural law set forth by Plato as we have seen at the beginning of his argument in the *Phædo* :—

“It can never be in accordance with Divine law,” he says, “that the impure should reach or touch the pure.”

*The pure cannot receive its opposite.*

The sifting, purifying process is therefore necessary. The judgment is a great natural law. With its awfulness Plato is profoundly impressed. In the *Laws* (959), he deprecates any immoderate or ostentatious display at the burial of the dead, and the reason which he gives is one that we ourselves may well ponder. The soul of the deceased, he says, has gone to *receive judgment*; it has gone to *fulfil its destiny*. Of what avail, he seems to imply, are all our earthly honours, when we know not whether the soul, stripped of its earthly trappings, is honourable or dishonourable in the sight of the Judge? This thought he works out in that one of his “myths” of the future life, which speaks most directly to us—the picture of the judgment in the *Gorgias*.

Plato gives throughout his works several striking pictures of the other world—in the *Meno*, the *Phædo*, the *Republic*, we have brilliant and glowing attempts to describe that which eye hath not seen nor ear heard, but like all such attempts they fail, and for obvious reasons. Neither the poetry nor the ingenious reasoning which pervade them can save these descriptions from falling into the category of the mythical. It is otherwise with the most “true myth” of the *Gorgias*. Based on one of the deepest truths of human nature, the conception is so profoundly significant that the word “mythos” seems utterly out of place in regard to it, and this Plato himself appears to have felt, for he prefaces it by saying that he is going to relate what his listeners would probably call a “myth,” but what he himself would call *true*, “for,” he says, “what I am about to tell you, I *mean* as true” (*Gorgias*, 523). This “true” myth, then, relates to the judgment passed upon the soul after death.

“No one,” says Plato (*Gorgias*, 522 E.), “who is not unreasonable and unmanly fears death itself. He fears unrighteousness; since of all evils the worst is for the soul to arrive in Hades laden with iniquity.” Why? The “myth” shall show.

Both in the time of Kronus (the Golden Age) and now, he continues, if a man has lived justly and piously he passes at once to the isles of the blessed, where he lives in happiness and free from evils; but if he has lived unjustly and without God, he goes to the prison house of punishment—Tartarus. Formerly this judgment was held by the living on the living—that is, each man was judged while yet in the body, on the day appointed for him to die. And so it fell out that the sentences passed were not always just. Plutus, the ruler of Tartarus, and those who had the oversight of the isles of the blest, both complained to Zeus that the wrong souls were sent to them. Zeus declared the cause of this to be, that the souls were judged while yet clad upon by the flesh. “Those,” said he, “who had evil souls were clothed in beautiful bodies, of good birth, and wealthy, and when sentence was given many witnesses came forward to testify that they had lived good lives. The judges, therefore, were confused—and the more so, inasmuch as they themselves were also covered, for before their own soul hung, like a curtain, eyes, ears, and body.”

So Zeus resolved that all this must be altered—the souls of men should henceforth be judged after death, and the judges themselves should be of those who had also passed out of the body—his own sons, Æacus, Rhadamanthys, and Minos. Judges and judged must alike be unclothed; soul must behold soul, bereft of its kinsfolk, and leaving behind it all its earthly embellishments, in order that the judgment might be just.

“This is what I have heard and believe to be true,” says Plato, “and from it I deduce the following: Death—so it seems to me—is nothing but the separation of two things, the body and the soul, from one another. When they are sundered, each of them will show itself pretty well as it was while the man lived, the body its nature, and the visible marks both of the care bestowed and the impressions made upon it. Thus, for instance, if a man while alive had a large body—either by nature, or by abundance of food, or both—his corpse is large after death, and stout, if he were stout during life, and so on. And if he had cultivated long hair, the corpse also has long hair. And again, if he had been a rogue, and bore traces of ugly blows on his body from the scourge, or other wounds, these after death are still to be seen. And if during life his limbs had been broken or distorted, this also would be manifest after death. In a word, in whatever condition the body was while alive, so will it be, either wholly or for the most part, for some time after death.”

**The Unveiling of the Soul.**—And certainly the same seems to me to be



the case with the soul. Everything is visible on the soul when she is stripped bare of the body—both her natural quality and the impressions made on her by the pursuits of the man during his life. When the souls arrive before the judge . . . he causes them to pass before him and beholds each one, without knowing whose it is. Sometimes he chances upon that of the great king or of some other king or ruler and perceives that there is nothing sound in it, but that the soul is severely scourged and covered with wounds caused by the false oaths and injustice which during life the man had stamped upon it—and all crooked, through lies and false pretensions, and in no way straight, because it had grown up without truth—and all misshapen and deformed, by reason of unbridled luxury and insolence and want of self-control in its doings. Seeing all this, he sends it in shame and disgrace straightway to the prison, where it is to undergo the punishment meet for it.

**The Efficacy of Punishment.**—There comes to every one, however, who suffers a punishment justly laid upon him by another, one of two things—either he becomes better and profits by it, or he serves as an example to others, that they, seeing what he suffers, may fear and become better. There are some who derive benefit from the enduring of a penalty laid on them by gods and men—those who have committed faults which are curable; nevertheless, this benefit accrues to them through pains and suffering, here as well as in Hades, for in no other way can they be freed from their unrighteousness.

But again, there are those who are unjust in the last degree, and through these unjust acts have become incurable—these become the warning examples. They themselves can never be benefited, seeing that they are incurable; but they are of use to others who see them enduring for all time, on account of their sins, the greatest and most grievous and fearful suffering, simply placed as examples in the prison house of Hades, to be a spectacle and a warning to the unrighteous who shall henceforth arrive there. . . .

Thus the judge, knowing nothing about the particular soul under inspection, neither whose it is nor of what descent, seeing only that it is bad, sends it to Tartarus, first having made a mark upon it as to whether it is curable or incurable.

**The Beautiful Soul.**—But sometimes he sees a soul that had lived piously and had followed after truth—that of a mere private citizen or some other, but specially, I maintain, of a philosopher, a lover of wisdom, who had looked to himself and not meddled with the affairs and intrigues of men—this soul he admires and sends it to the isles of the blessed.

**Conclusion.**—"So I," concludes the Platonic Socrates, in whose mouth, most fittingly, the myth is placed, "being convinced of these things, look to this—*how I may show the judge my soul in the soundest possible condition.* Therefore, renouncing the honours which most men seek after, and directing my eyes towards the truth, I will endeavour to live, in reality, as nobly as I can, and when death comes, so to die. And I exhort all other men, so far as I can, to enter upon this life and this contest,<sup>1</sup> which I hold to be far before any other contest upon earth."

*How I may show the judge my soul in the soundest possible condition.*—Have we not here again an anticipation of St. Paul (2 Cor. v. 9-10): "Wherefore we labour" (*philotimoumetha* = strive eagerly), says the apostle, "that, whether in the body or out of the body, we may be well-pleasing to Him. For we must all appear before the Judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done (*eprazen* = practised), whether it be good or bad."

<sup>1</sup> *Agōna* = an allusion to the games.

Plato, too, like St. Paul (*ibid.* v. 11), knowing this "terror" of the Lord, sought to persuade men. "I exhort all men to enter upon this contest," he says, "so to live, that when their souls shall be unclothed and appear in all their nakedness, there may be seen in them no crookedness or distortion, no blemish or scar, no 'spot or wrinkle or any such thing,' but that each soul may be presented to the judge shining gloriously in its own proper jewels—those jewels which he enumerates in the *Phædo* (114 E.)—the jewels of wisdom and righteousness, of manliness, of freedom, and of truth."

Jesus Christ alone has demonstrated the truth of that concerning which Plato was most fully persuaded. To Him alone the bourne whence no other traveller has ever returned set no bounds. He has the keys of Death and Hades. He alone has brought life and immortality to light. Yet it is not too much to say—for the passages quoted have proved it—that Plato, with no actual proof before him, believed in the certainty of a future life with the most absolute and intense conviction, with an enthusiasm which puts to the blush the apathy of professing Christians! He will not even allow mourning for the dead. Death is not a thing to be mourned over or feared; it is the very consummation of all that a true lover of wisdom desires—the moment for which he longs, when he shall have thrown off this mortal body and escaped like a prisoner from the prison-house to be—with God. This is Plato's view of death.

### THE IDEAL RULER

It is, however, when we turn to Plato that we find the fullest representation of the ideal ruler—the ruler as he ought to be—in the ideal state. And in the first place let us note, that although Plato's ideal is a republic, in which all are brethren, yet that there are to be rulers in the strict sense of the word, rulers armed with authority. Yet these rulers are not to be kings—they are to have the milder title of *guardians* (*phylakes*). And although Christ never repudiated the title of king—King of kings, and Lord of lords, He is expressly said to be—yet His relation to His subjects is something very different. "I have called you friends," He says, and as above, "I am the Good Shepherd," "I lay down my life for the sheep," so that Plato's chosen title of *guardian* applies just as well to Christ as does Homer's favourite description—*shepherd*. He not only leads but guards—*i.e.* defends the sheep.

What, then, in Plato's estimation, are the qualities of the guardian—the ruler of the people *kalokagathos*, truly noble and good? If we turn to the Second Book of the *Republic*, we shall find there a description of the qualities essential in those who are to be selected for the office. They are as follows:—

The ideal guardian of the state must possess two opposite sets of qualities—two temperaments by nature opposed—those of the defender and the legislator, counsellor, or ruler proper.<sup>1</sup> The last named he sums up in the philosopher, or lover of wisdom—no peace can there be for the world until the philosopher bears rule (*Rep.*, v. 473 C.).

Will such a ruler or such a state ever be found? Not at present on earth—but one such ruler and one such state is quite enough, he says (*ibid.* 502 A., B.).

1. The guardian must be quick to see the enemy, and swift to pursue him, when seen—consequently, he must be courageous—must possess that certain

<sup>1</sup> One cannot but think that Plato is summing up and idealising the two opposite race-characteristics of the greatest peoples of Greece—Ionians and Dorians.



something which will make him absolutely fearless and unconquerable. In a word, he must be *manly* (*andreios*).

2. Then, secondly, he must be high-spirited; nay, even passionate (*thymoeidēs*) (capable of a hot outburst on occasion, either of indignation or of zeal—for without this mental quality, mere bodily courage will not avail much).

3. But these high-spirited courageous people are apt to be fierce—(*agrioi*—savage)—with one another, and the other citizens. We must, therefore, have a third quality, and that is gentleness. It is absolutely indispensable that our guardian shall not only be high-spirited but *gentle* (*praos*), a word one of whose significations, “tamed,” is significant enough.

4. For our fourth quality, we have an illustration or type, which is homely indeed. Nevertheless if we are to follow Plato we must not pick and choose, but give his notions truthfully as we find them. If our guardian is to be high-spirited and yet gentle—on the defensive against the foe, mild towards friends—he must have the power of *discernment*, of knowing who are his friends and who are not. Here Plato's illustration is the faithful guardian of the house, the watch-dog, at once the most high-spirited and the gentlest of the animals—who is on guard and fierce towards strangers, simply because he does not know them, and gentle towards those of the household because he does know them. This characteristic of the dog (as watcher of the house) Plato regards as most noteworthy, and it must be found also in the faithful watcher of the city. He must be able to distinguish between friend and foe.

5. Then, finally, Plato adds to the foregoing characteristics one which, in his opinion, represents the sum of human virtues—the true guardian, he says, must be a “philosopher.” We shall inquire presently what Plato meant in very truth by this term “philosopher”—so dear to him. Meanwhile, let us hear his conclusion as to the qualities necessary in the ruler:—

“He who would be a good and noble guardian of the city” (the true *kalokagathos*), must, he says, “be by nature a philosopher—a lover of wisdom, and knowledge, and gentle—as well as high-spirited, swift, and strong.”

1. *Manliness*.—[This paragraph is wanting in the MS.—Ed.]

2. *High-spirited*.—Was Jesus Christ “high-spirited”? Can we with truth apply such an epithet to Him? Can we venture to say of the Man of Sorrows that He was a “Man of Spirit”? Yea, verily, why not? Was He then incapable of a sudden flash of anger or of generous indignation? If so, He was incapable of acting in reality as Guardian either of the truth or of the interests of others, for as Plato himself tells us farther on (*Rep.* iv. 441), “spirit is the auxiliary of reason.” Reason by itself is necessarily cold and slow in action—it needs the glow and impetus of spirit to quicken it into warmth and zeal. In fact, is it not true that the nobler the nature, the more “high-spirited” it is? Wherefore, let us ask: Did He who in all things was made like unto His brethren—yet without sin—possess His share of spirit? Let His biographers testify. Hear what they note concerning Him before His healing of the man with the withered arm on the Sabbath day—“He looked round on them *with anger*, being grieved at the hardness of their hearts”—the momentary flash revealed His Divine scorn of their narrow-mindedness which was as visible to the bystanders as is the lightning that flashes out from an apparently serene sky. Or again, hear His own words, chronicled for our learning. Do they not breathe the very concentration of passion: “Scribes and Pharisees, whited sepulchres—hypocrites—ye generation of vipers—ye that devour widows’ houses and for a pretence make long prayers—how can ye escape the damnation of hell?” Ask those who listened to Jesus Christ whether He was wanting either in the capacity for indignation or in passionate devotion to a

cause? Of whom are the simple words recorded: "And His disciples remembered that it was written: 'The zeal of Thine house hath eaten me up.'" And the occasion of the "remembrance"—when the Peasant of Galilee, armed indeed with the scourge of small cords which He had made for Himself, but armed still more with the fire of a righteous indignation burning in His eyes, overturned the tables of the money-changers, and drove out the traffickers from the courts of the temple of God. Hear again His own words: "It is written, My house shall be called the House of Prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves."

Does not the "high spirit" of Jesus Christ differ from the same quality in ourselves merely in the occasions on which it was manifested? We keep our high spirit in reserve to defend ourselves and our rights—He kept His in reserve to defend the cause of truth and justice—to protect the unfortunate, the weak, and those who had no helper.

3. *Gentleness*.—Ah! Here is a characteristic which by a wondrous intuition Plato has guessed at as necessary in the Ruler. Guessed at, we repeat, for is not the whole spirit of the rule of antiquity built up on the opposite quality—on sternness?

Few, indeed, are the instances on record in which a ruler could afford to lay aside, even for a day, the emblems of authority—the sceptre and the scourge—and exchange them for the olive-branch. "The kings of the Gentiles exercise authority upon them, and they who do so are called benefactors," says Jesus Christ to His disciples, "but it shall not be so among you." Why not? "For I, your Master, am among you as He that serveth." And, in fact, so completely does this aspect of the character of Jesus Christ, His *praotētēs*, His gentleness and meekness, His beneficence, fill our minds, that it has almost overshadowed and eclipsed the other—the sterner and regal side. And yet it is undoubtedly the combination of the two in perfect balance that made His perfect and unique character first as Ruler of Men, and then as the Pattern Man—the Son of Man. Do we not recognise this union of high spirit and gentleness as at once the rarest and the most precious of human qualities, as a something best set forth by the *aidōs* of Homer?

4. Then, again, was Christ's claim to be the Guardian of Men substantiated by any proof of *discernment* in Him? Did He know friends from foes, true from false, those of the household from those that are without?

To this there can be but one answer—He that spake as never man spake knew also as never man knew. Look at that wondrous picture of the woman taken in sin, and brought to Him for judgment by those whose zeal for righteousness is such that they will be satisfied with nothing less than the death of the offender. Is the Christ deceived? If the woman kneeling in agony in the midst is not as yet of His household, neither in His judgment are her accusers. Listen to His words: "He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone at her." And the result? "They all went out beginning with the eldest even unto the youngest"—being convicted of their own conscience.

Such instances, as we know, can be multiplied at pleasure. He "knew what was in man," therefore He would not commit Himself to men. He was deceived neither by their apparent devotion when they would come by "force and make Him a king"—nor by apparent deference to His opinion. "Why tempt ye Me, ye hypocrites? Show Me the tribute-money." Well may the apostle take Christ's knowledge of men as one of the very bases of His Church. "The foundation of the Lord standeth sure, having this seal: the Lord *knoweth* them that are His." And Christ Himself makes His knowledge of men the very basis of the final judgment which as Ruler of Men He shall pass: "Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name,



and in Thy name done many wondrous works? Then will I profess unto them I never *knew* you. Depart from Me, all ye that work iniquity."

5. Was Christ a philosopher? can only be answered when we have considered what Plato's ideal of the philosopher was. The consideration of Plato's next and all-embracing qualification, viz. that a guardian must be a philosopher—we shall, for the reasons before mentioned, consider apart.

The consideration of Plato's next and all-embracing qualification, viz. that a guardian must be a philosopher, we must consider apart, not only because of its comprehensiveness, but because Plato himself suddenly alters his plan in the third book, and divides his guardians into two classes: (1) those of whom we have been speaking, the watchers and defenders against enemies whom he now calls allies of the guardians, and (2) the legislators, or guardians proper, the philosophers, who are the real rulers of his ideal state.

To complete his description of the defenders, however, he adds two other characteristics which we must briefly note:—

6. *Love for the State*.—The best guardian or watcher will be the man who is best fitted for the duty of watching. He must therefore not only possess wisdom and strength, but he must *care* for the state, make its interests his own.

Now that we have seen what Plato wished his guardians to be by nature, we may pass on and discover with him the principles on which they were to be selected and appointed (412 C. *et seq.*; 413 C. *et seq.*). These qualities which we have just noted—manliness, high spirit, gentleness, discernment, love of knowledge—may be born in a man, but they do not in themselves make him a good guardian, *i.e.* a watcher for others. He may use them, one and all, for his own interests. Before our guardian can be appointed, then, we must make very sure concerning two things—first, that he has that one quality which beyond all others makes a good watcher; and then, secondly, that he shall possess that other quality which guarantees the stability of the first.

What, then, is the one supreme quality in a watcher? Is it not that he shall identify himself and his interests with the thing which he has to watch?

The best guardian, says Plato, is the man who is most of a *watcher* (*i.e.* who is wrapped up, heart and soul, in the task). The watcher of the state, therefore, must not only possess wisdom and strength, he must actually *CARE* for the state. A man, he continues, will care most for what he loves, and he would probably love most that which is benefited by what benefits himself, and of which he might think that when it fared well, his own welfare would be assured, that when reverses came to it, he himself would suffer. He therefore will make the best guardian who has been observed all his life through to do with zeal what he considered to be for the benefit of the STATE, and not even to wish to act in any way contrary to that.

That the state is first, the individual second; that the interests of the individual are bound up with those of the state—this is to be the guiding principle of the ruler, and no one is to be chosen who has not given evidence that he has taken it for his rule of life.

Later on, in the sixth book (502 E.), Plato sums up all this in the one stipulation that the guardian must be a patriot—a *philopolis*—lover of the state.

Can we venture to say of Jesus Christ that He was a *philopolis* in this sense—that He put His state first, Himself second; that He considered His own interests as bound up with those of His people? Nay, ought we not rather to ask, Of whom could such a principle be affirmed with greater truth than of Christ? Does He not lay it down as the distinction between the Good Shepherd and the hireling that the hireling fleeth because he is an hireling,

and careth not for the sheep. The hireling, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming and leaveth the sheep.<sup>1</sup> The Good Shepherd, on the contrary, remains on the spot because his interests are bound up with the safety of His flock. They are "his own"—what benefits them will benefit him, what injures them will injure him. But, of course, here the parallel fails. We see that the principle of self-interest which in antiquity, far more than in modern life, was inseparably bound up with patriotism, falls far short of the truth here. To watch and work for the best interests of the state was in ancient days not only for the ruler, but for the private citizen, part of the doctrine of self-preservation. When the state prospered, the individual was free; when it fell, he was enslaved. The principle of self-interest, therefore, necessarily predominates in Plato's ideal of "caring for" the state. In what sense, however, can self-interest be said to actuate Christ as a Ruler—as the Good Shepherd? Simply in that highest and most beautiful sense in which the self ceases to be self-centred, widens out, and perpetuates itself in others.

Ask the father why he watches and toils and struggles to give his son the best possible start in life—ask the mother why she watches and waits unresting day and night by the bed of her sick child—and they will tell you that it is because what they are watching and working for is infinitely precious; their own interests have passed over into a new self, and self-interest has taken a new name, even the most unselfish name of love. And is not this the transformation which the Christ has wrought in the ideal of the shepherd and ruler of the people? Is He not Himself the Father of the flock which He purchased with His own blood? Are not its members "the members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones"?<sup>2</sup>

To sum up, we may boldly say that Jesus was not only a *philopolis*, a lover of His own State, the Church, but a *philopatris*, a lover of that state into which He entered when He condescended to take human flesh. He was a true patriot in the natural as in the spiritual sense of the term; He loved the little country of His birth with a depth of affection that will only find relief in tears; and He loved the greater country of the whole inhabited Kosmos—no man therein who is not His brother. "Go ye out into all nations," and win them for Me, is His last command. He will have all men to be saved—to come, that is, under the shadow of His wings, within the embrace of His love. *Philopolis*, *philopatris*—Patriot beyond all others—is the Guardian of Guardians, Jesus Christ.

**Nature of the Lover of Wisdom.**—After defining those to whom the name of "Lover of Wisdom" (*philosophos*) is to be given, Plato proceeds to sum up the qualities which must exist in him by nature, in order that he may really be a partaker of true being; and first and foremost among these qualities he places—

1. *Love of Truth.*—The true lover of wisdom, he says (*Rep.*, vi. 485), does not willingly admit a lie into his mind; he hates it, and loves the truth.

That is likely to be the case, says Glaucon.

Not only likely, my friend, retorts Socrates warmly, but necessarily it will be the case, for the man who loves anything by nature must love all that is akin and related to the object of his affections.

Right!

And could you find anything more akin to wisdom than truth?

How could I? said he.

Then can the same nature be wisdom-loving and deceit-loving?

Impossible!

<sup>1</sup> St. John x. 12, 13. <sup>2</sup> Ephesians v. 30.



Therefore, he that is truly a lover of learning must from his very youth, so far as he possibly can, strive after all truth?

Certainly!

2. Then, this concentration of the mind on the pursuit of truth, brings another quality in its train, viz. soundness of mind or temperance (*sophrosyne*).

We know (by experience), says Socrates, that he whose desires are strongly directed towards one thing will have them weaker in other directions, as in the case of a stream directed into another channel.

Of course.

He, then, whose desires are directed towards knowledge and everything connected with it, will, I think—if he be a true lover of wisdom, and not a mere pretender—be absorbed in the pleasures of the soul, and find no place for those of the body.

That is most necessary.

Then, says Socrates, such an one will be of sound mind = temperate (*sophron*).

3. And being temperate, he will be *in no way a lover of money*, for those things on account of which money is eagerly sought for at great sacrifice, may be sought for by any other rather than by him (*i.e.* they are things absolutely out of harmony with the character of the true lover of wisdom).

That is true.

4. And there is another quality which we must take into account when we are deciding whether any one has the nature of a lover of wisdom, or not.

What is that?

There must be in him no secret *illiberality*. A mean spirit is totally opposed to the spirit whose striving is ever directed towards the *WHOLE* of things, divine and human.

That is most true, said he.

Do you suppose that he who has magnificence of mind and who contemplates all time and all existence, will think much of human life?

Impossible, he rejoined.

5. Death, therefore, will not be terrible to such an one?

Not at all.

The cowardly and mean nature, then, can have no share in true philosophy? I should say not.

6. What then? The soul arrayed in the beauty of order (*kosmos*)—the soul that is not covetous, or mean, or boastful, or cowardly—can it in any sense become hard in its dealings with others, or unjust?

It can not.

By this test then you may examine the wisdom-loving soul—not confining your examination to its youthful days—by noting whether it is just and mild, or unsociable and rude.

True.

7. Nor must we, I think, overlook another point.

What is that?

Whether our candidate *learns readily* or with difficulty. Do you expect that any one will love adequately anything that he does with pain, and in which after toil and trouble he makes little progress?

Impossible.

And again, if he is full of forgetfulness, and unable to retain anything of what he learns, will he not be empty of knowledge.

How can it be otherwise?

And labouring thus in vain, will he not be compelled at last to hate both himself and his fruitless occupation?

How should he not?

A forgetful soul, then, we cannot admit among the true lovers of wisdom, but must seek those gifted with a good memory.

Certainly.

8. And shall we not maintain that the inharmonious and unseemly nature can only tend towards disproportion?

Yes.

And do you believe truth to be akin to proportion or to disproportion?

To proportion?

In addition to the other qualities, then, we must seek for a justly-proportioned and gracious mind which, of its own inborn nature, shall incline towards the true being of everything.

Certainly.

What then? Do we not seem to you to have enumerated all the qualities that, in a manner, hang together and are necessary to the soul which is to participate, fully and perfectly, in true being?

These are certainly the most necessary, said he.

And can you find fault with a pursuit (philosophy) in which he alone can engage who is by nature endowed with a good memory, quick to learn, of noble and magnificent, gracious mind, the friend and kinsman of truth, justice, courage, temperance?

Momus himself (the personification of blame), said he, could find no fault with such a pursuit.

Then, said I, is it not to such as these, and these only, when perfected by years and education, that you will entrust the state?

[The comments on the first three qualifications of the ruler were planned, but not written.—ED.]

When we come to the next (or fourth) qualification of the Ruler—we are for the moment staggered. Magnificence! Can the word in any way be predicted of the lowly Carpenter of Nazareth? Yea, verily—in all aspects of His character magnificence is the only word which can be used of Him with propriety, for this word "*megaloprepeia*," generally rendered by "magnificence," means in its trueness, simply "befitting greatness."

Whether we take it in its etymological significance, however, or in its secondary and ordinary meaning, the mind of Jesus Christ, with reverence be it said, will stand the test. He was magnificent as no mortal man ever was, before or since. Let us venture to measure His earthly manifestation by Plato's standard.

(a) *Magnificence in giving*.—Where do you find a "secret corner of illiberality" in Him? When Jesus Christ gives, He gives as the Giver of the sunshine and the rain from heaven. Think of the wine at the marriage feast—the ample, bounteous store far and away beyond the needs on the surface of the occasion that called forth the gift. Think of the feeding of the fainting multitudes. When Jesus Christ feeds, He feeds not by ones and twos, or even by hundreds—but by thousands. All are satisfied, and a surplus is left. The disciples cast the nets at His bidding—they draw them in, full to overflowing. It seems as though He who said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive," resented the restraint which He imposed upon Himself in the matter of giving—as though His Divine bounty on the occasions when He allowed it play, welled over in the very delight—the "blessedness" of giving.

(b) *Magnificence in receiving*.—Our Lord has this other characteristic of a



truly "great" mind—He can recognise and appreciate greatness in others. He who knows the blessedness of "giving" allows that joy to others as well as to Himself. When His disciples rebuked the "waste" of the ointment poured upon His sacred body, they doubtless expected to be commended by Him who had said, "Gather up the fragments that remain that nothing be lost." Not so! Christ can exercise a wise economy, but He can be "magnificent." Behind the "waste" He perceives the priceless treasure of a magnificent impulse—it is the devotion of a heart nigh to breaking with its weight of gratitude that finds vent in the fragrance of the spices, and the Master accepts the costly sacrifice, as He had accepted the silent homage of the poor woman who washed His feet with her tears and dried them with her hair—the deepest and most lowly tribute ever paid by impurity to purity in all the magnificence of its lustre. Christ is magnificent also in this, that He measures men by motives, not by acts—the two mites of the widow outweighed in His esteem the treasures of the wealthiest because of the magnificence of the motive that prompted and accompanied the gift—the dedication of the soul and body, the all of the giver. Yes, Jesus Christ is princely in His magnificence, both as Giver and Receiver.

(c) Then, finally, is He magnificent in Plato's ultimate and most real sense? Does He "think much of human life" and its interests, or is He magnificent in mind—absorbed in great and lofty aims, "contemplating all time and all existence"?

Who ever surpassed Jesus Christ in the magnificence of His plans and aims? How absolutely insignificant—how contracted has the ideal state of Plato himself become, when contrasted with that Kingdom of God which Christ came to found!

Think of the scheme and its originator—a Syrian peasant building up in imagination a kingdom which is to fill the world, a kingdom against which the gates of Hades and of death shall not prevail—a kingdom which literally is to embrace "all time and all existence."

Think of the means by which the kingdom is to develop. No external power, whether of pomp, or grandeur, or the sword, or favour of the great of the earth, is to have share in the enterprise. The kingdom is to grow as nature herself grows, from within—not from without—by sheer internal force.

Truly in the magnificent simplicity of the means to be employed the scheme betrays the Master-mind.

Then, finally, think of the end—the picture of the Founder of the Kingdom as Judge—the throne set—the attendant angels—all nations gathered before Him to hear their final doom—the separation of just and unjust, accomplished by the insight of the Judge as easily as the separation of sheep from goats by the shepherd.

Why did not His hearers resent these pictures of the last judgment and the statement of the speaker, their fellow-man apparently, that He was to be arbiter of their eternal destiny? Simply because the whole picture was in harmony with the character and life of the speaker. His hearers felt instinctively that the sifting and the separating had begun already with the appearance of the Founder. Each knew in his heart that the witness of John the Baptist was true. "There standeth one among you whom ye know not. He it is who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose."

Yes—think of all this, and we shall cease to ask whether Jesus Christ was "magnificent" or not. In His giving and taking, His plans, schemes, aims, Jesus Christ stands out with simplicity and dignity of the one truly "magni-

ficent mind" that has always acted, spoke, and thought as "befitted greatness."

**Definition of the Philosopher.**—The very first quality which Plato requires in the philosopher who would be guardian or ruler is, that he shall have eyes.

About this, he says, there can be no doubt. We need, not a blind man, but one who has keen sight, to keep guard over anything. And this being so, what about keeping watch over the laws of the State? How do they differ from the blind—those men who in reality have no knowledge of the true being of each thing, and have no clear pattern in their own souls, and are not able to follow the example of the painter—to direct their gaze to absolute truth, to refer constantly to that, and behold it as exactly as possible, that they may order the laws here concerning the beautiful and the just and the good, if it is necessary to make new laws, and may watch over and preserve those already in existence?

Is he who has this power of vision any better as a legislator than a blind man? We trow not.

The final definition of the lover of wisdom-ruler, then, is that, in contradistinction to such as wander about vaguely in subjection to the many and varying opinions of the hour, he shall have true spiritual insight, and shall be able to grasp the eternal and unchanging.

Of course one of the great necessities of "the eyes" is in the matter of judging as well as legislating.

We have already spoken of our Lord as Judge, and the feeling amongst those who heard Him that the judgment had begun already. St. Peter's outburst, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord," must have had many an echo. But let us note that Jesus Christ never asks to be acknowledged on a mere impulse of the sort. His claims are of a deeper nature. He and they appeal to the "divine element" in man—the reason. Now, has Plato, the most reasonable of reasoners, anything to tell us about the qualifications of a judge? He has, and most weighty is his reasoning. He says in a famous comparison of the training of judge and physician:—

Those physicians will become most skilful who from youth up have combined with the learning of their art the greatest experience of disease, and that in the worst possible forms; and who, moreover, are not particularly healthy by nature, and have themselves suffered from all manner of diseases.

For, I imagine, they do not cure the body by the body—in that case, we could not allow them ever to be or to have been ill; but they cure the body by the soul, which is not able if it has become and is ill, to cure anything.

But the judge governs the soul by the soul; hence it is not allowable that he should be trained from youth up, amid vicious souls, or should consort with them, or pass through and commit all manner of unrighteousness in order that he may be quick from his own experience, to form a judgment concerning the sins of others, as in the case of the diseases of the body. But the soul must have had no experience or contamination of evil habits in youth if, itself noble and good, it is to judge righteous judgment healthfully. Hence, youths who are good and honourable appear simple and are easily imposed upon by the unjust, because they have no examples of what is in themselves, evil.

Hence, again, the judge must not be young; he must have acquired his knowledge of evil late, not as something at home in his own soul, but as something foreign to it, which he has studied in others through a lengthened period, and the nature of which he has discerned by knowledge (*epistēmē*), not by actual experience (*empeiria*).



Most noble indeed, responds Glaucon, will such a judge be.

**Our Lord as Judge and Physician.**—Who does not see that Our Lord fulfils every requirement of this “most noble” judge? Who but He among the children of men could say to those who had every opportunity of watching Him, “Which of you convinceth Me of sin”?<sup>1</sup> He alone was “pure and uncontaminated from youth up.” He alone would study evil as something “foreign” to His soul, never “at home” there, and, being thus Himself “noble and good,” could “pass righteous judgment healthfully.”

Then, again, look at JESUS CHRIST as the physician, no less than the judge, of the soul. Is not He who Himself bare our sicknesses, and made experience of bodily weakness and suffering in its intensest shape, best able to diagnose the action and reaction of body and mind one upon the other, and to know how far a poor soul is really responsible for those sins, which, as Plato tells us in the *Timæus*, are caused by the influence of the body upon it? Is it not just because of His deep personal experience of human weakness and suffering that He is to be the Judge of human conduct? “The Father hath committed all judgment to the Son.” Why? Because He is the Son of Man.<sup>2</sup>

2. But then, what is that second quality which ensures the stability of this “caring for” and “love” of the state? It is FAITHFULNESS. And how can it be known that a man is faithful? In no other way than by the touchstone of trial. The guardian must be proved as to the firmness of his resolution to do all for the good of the STATE; he must be put to the test in no less than three different ways:—

(a) *Constancy against deception.*—First, says Plato, from youth up, he must be carefully observed, and set to perform those works in which he would be most likely to forget or be deceived about his great ruling principle. He who remembers and is not to be deceived is to be chosen as ruler; he who forgets is to be rejected.

(b) *Constancy under trial.*—Next we must set before him labours and pains and conflicts (*agones*), and see whether he will remain faithful to his principle under all.

(c) *Constancy amid terrors and pleasures.*—Finally, he must pass through a third kind of contest; he must be exposed alternately to influences which exert a sort of fascination over the mind—terror and pleasures. And having thus been tested much more thoroughly than gold tried in the fire, we shall see if he is able to resist these fascinations and come out of them all nobly and with dignity, showing himself a good guardian of HIMSELF and of the “music” which he has learned. Note the phrase, “The music which he has learned,” and preserving all through, rhythm and harmony within himself, so as to be of the greatest use to himself and to the state.

He who, as boy, youth, and man has been thus put to the test, and come uncontaminated and pure out of the ordeal—he shall be appointed ruler and guardian of the state, shall be honoured during life, and after death receive the highest meed of glory, and the noblest memorials which we have to bestow.

Now is there anything in the life of Christ corresponding to this process of sifting and proving? Let us take Plato’s tests in his own order and examine them.

(a) The first trial consists, as we remember, in the being set to do works in which the future guardian may be specially apt to forget and be deceived about his great principle of the good of the state.

Naturally, when we begin to think about Christ in this connection, our minds turn at once to the great temptation which the Evangelists tell us took

<sup>1</sup> St. John.

<sup>2</sup> St. John.

place just before He entered upon His public work, and began to found that ideal state, the kingdom of heaven. We can see that here Christ—looking at Him for the moment simply as a man amongst men—is in a position in which He is peculiarly liable to be deceived into taking wrong views and making a false start, inasmuch as He has had no experience of public life. At the time of the trial, moreover, He is alone, and has been so for a lengthened period, which has been occupied with high thoughts of the great work before Him, and His own scheme for its accomplishment. Again, He has taken no food for forty days; His protracted fast, combined with sustained mental effort, has left the Son of Man weaker, apparently, than the weakest of His human brethren. At this juncture the temptation comes: "Command that these stones be made bread"—"Use Thy Divine power for Thyself and Thine own necessities!"

Will He yield? No! The Divine power which He possesses as Son of God, He will use, as Son of Man, only for the good of His state, of His flock; and He, who afterwards fed the multitudes, "because He had compassion on them," will not have compassion on Himself, so far as to give Himself any advantage over them. "In all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful"<sup>1</sup> Guardian. His citizens will have to fast and suffer hunger in days to come—they will have no Divine power to meet the necessity, and He, accordingly, divests Himself of this power that He may identify Himself completely with them, and leave them an example of submission and endurance. Christ is faithful to His brethren and the good of the state.

Then the temptation comes in another form: "Do something daring and grand—something which will excite the wonder of the multitude, and draw the attention of men to Thyself, and Thy work—and mark Thee out as Him whom the angels in their hands have borne up, the Chosen, and Preserved of God."

What! Build the ideal state, the kingdom of God, upon a foundation of excitement and spurious emotions that appeal to the most non-thoughtful elements in man? The suggestion is not to be entertained for a moment. Again, the Christ is faithful to Himself and the good of the state.

Last comes the most subtle trial of all. "Thou art about to enter upon a dangerous enterprise. Thou, poor peasant of Galilee, wouldst convert the world, wouldst alleviate the countless miseries of human life, wouldst bring back again the golden age. And how, thinkest Thou, can success be compassed without the material elements of success? How wilt Thou gain a single follower with naught of worldly store to offer? I, Mammon, am at Thy service, if Thou, with Thy commanding intellect, wilt but own that I—not God—am ruler of the world?"

Again the Christ is not deceived. The state, whose foundation is God, and whose first and last stone is self-sacrifice, needs no such ally as is now offering himself, a very wolf in disguise, to the Shepherd. "Get thee hence, thou enemy. It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve," and the enemy, detected, leaveth Him.

Thrice, then, Christ comes victoriously out of the attempt to deceive Him and make Him "forget." He will be faithful to His subjects, identify His interests with theirs, and build up the state, even the kingdom of God, on the noble lines of absolutely disinterested toil and suffering. And let us note that the threefold victory is won, in each case, by the memory of the "music"

<sup>1</sup> Hebrews ii. 17.



wherewith as man He has stored His mind: "It is written"—"It is written"—"It is written."<sup>1</sup>

(b) Plato's second test corresponded exactly to that which the Son of Man voluntarily chose when He refused to build up His state by the help of the temporal power in any shape or form. There are set before Him "labours and pains and agonies." We seem to have here, in brief, an epitome of the life of Christ—the labours, the earlier labours at the carpenter's bench, the later labours in the building up of the kingdom—the three years of constant and exhausting work teaching in private, preaching in public, the journeyings to and fro, the ministering to the bodily wants of the multitudes, the healing of the sick, the lame, the lunatic, the blind; the *pains*—the physical privations, "The Son of man hath not where to lay His head," the enduring of weariness, of hunger, of thirst—the mental suffering of perpetual contradiction, of rejection, of contempt and scorn, of treachery and betrayal; finally, the untold *agony* of the last great struggle, and its consummation on the cross.

(c) Then, as to Plato's third test—the exposure to the "fascinations" of terror and of pleasure. Is there anything on record which shows that Christ ever lost His presence of mind? Does He show perturbation when roused by the shrieks of His followers amid the howling of winds and waves on the Lake of Galilee? Listen to His accents, sweet and musical as ever, "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?"<sup>2</sup>

Does He shrink and quail when brought bound before the man who tells Him that he has power to crucify Him? Listen again to His words: "Thou couldest have no power at all against Me except it were given thee from above."<sup>3</sup>

Has He lost the gentle "rhythm and harmony" of perfect self-command? Is He not still, although bound, "Guardian of Himself"? Verily, the King of Terror has no terror for Christ.

Then as to the test by pleasures—it is difficult even to think of "pleasure" in connection with the Man of Sorrows. Nevertheless, inasmuch as He was "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin," the Son of man must needs have passed through this ordeal also, and we know at least of two points on which He was assailed—two rocks on which human souls, and these not the least noble, have made shipwreck—the love of honour and the love of power. How does He meet them? By declining to receive either the one or the other. Those whom He has restored to sight, He strictly charges, "See that no man know it."<sup>4</sup> To the leper cleansed, He says, "See thou say nothing to any man."<sup>5</sup> "I receive not honour from men."<sup>6</sup> The fame of Him goes abroad, the multitudes come together to hear Him—He withdraws Himself into the wilderness, and prays.<sup>7</sup> He perceives that they will "come and take Him by force to make Him a king"—"He departs again into a mountain Himself alone."<sup>8</sup> "My kingdom," He says to the Roman governor, "is not of this world." The "fascinations" of fame and power have no fascinations for Christ. He remains to the end faithful to His State, and to what He considers will be for her good.

"CHRIST JESUS, who was faithful to Him that appointed Him . . . as a Son over His own house, whose house are we."

Does He not then correspond in every detail to all that is noble in the ideal guardian of Plato?

<sup>1</sup> St. Matthew iv. 4, 7, 10; St. Luke iv. 4, 8, 12.

<sup>2</sup> St. Matthew viii. 26.

<sup>3</sup> St. John xix. 11.

<sup>4</sup> Heb. iv. 15; St. Matthew ix. 30.

<sup>5</sup> St. Mark i. 44.

<sup>6</sup> St. John v. 41.

<sup>7</sup> St. Luke v. 16.

<sup>8</sup> St. John vi. 15.

Was ever man tried and tested as was the Man of Sorrows? Was he not "proved more thoroughly than gold in the fire"?

Did ever man endure more nobly labours, pains, and agonies than He who tasted death for every man, and underwent the great experiment of suffering that He might identify Himself with us—have our poor human experience, and be able thereby to sympathise with us? Did ever man come out of the ordeal with more perfect "dignity" than He whose very executioners were forced to cry, "Truly, this was the Son of God!"<sup>1</sup>

Verily we answer, He hath proved Himself by the test of experiment, no less than by the supreme qualities of His nature, worthy to be guardian and ruler of mankind, worthy to receive the highest "meed of glory," the "noblest memorials" we have to offer—Christ, the King of kings, and Lord of lords—the Good Shepherd, the faithful teacher and guardian of His people.<sup>2</sup>

### V.—PLATO'S LIMITS

The name given to this section—Plato's "Limits," or, to express it more honestly, Plato's "Mistakes"—will not please some of our readers. All that we have hitherto gathered from the works of this greatest of Hellenic thinkers is so godlike that we are inclined to demur to the notion that his genius could be limited. Nay, some may even ask what difference there is between the thought of a Plato, and that which we are accustomed to regard as "inspired." Plato himself believed that he too "spoke not without some breath of inspiration from God," and he was right. No thinking man or woman will deny that (as Justin Martyr, Clement, and others of the old fathers maintain) the Logos has ever been in the world. The Divine reason could use a Plato as an instrument equally with a St. John or a St. Paul. Wherein, then, lies the difference between a John and a Plato? Simply in this, that inspiration is one thing, revelation another. Plato had the true enthusiasm (God-within), the inspiration of the Divine reason, irradiating that Divine element, the human reason, which was given to man, as he says in the *Timæus*, "to raise him as a plant, not of earthly, but of heavenly growth to his kindred which is in heaven." Plato, more than any other pre-Christian thinker, "felt after" God—hence more than any other he "touched" God. But Plato's touching (and consequently, his light) was intermittent and partial. He was not "That true light which lighteneth every man that cometh into the world," any more than the other forerunners, Hebrew or Hellenic, of the light. Plato, in fact, with all his breadth, his sublimity, his penetration, has his limitations. Consciously and unconsciously, his was no universal message for mankind. Far from that, it is not too much to say, that had some of his ideas been carried out into practice, the result would have been absolutely fatal to the best interests of mankind. This will become evident if we look at certain broad features of his teaching.

(1) **Plato and the Masses.**—Not only would Plato himself have been the first to scout the notion that his own views could be shared by the mass of men around him, but it is not too much to say that he would have regarded with absolute distrust any system of philosophy which advanced the claim to be universally comprehensible. "The world," he says emphatically, "can never be a philosopher, *i.e.* can never love wisdom" (*Rep.*, vi. 494 A.).

<sup>1</sup> St. Matthew xxvii. 54.

<sup>2</sup> Hebrews iv. 15. In the original: "We have not an High Priest which cannot sympathise with our weaknesses, but was in all points," &c. (1 Tim. vi. 15).



An aristocrat by birth and education, Plato's conservative notions, inherited and acquired, leavened his whole after-thought.<sup>1</sup> The philosopher came to be in his opinion the true and only aristocrat, and in the very nature of things (according to him) it was as impossible that Demos could turn aristocrat in the intellectual or spiritual, as in the political, sense.

**How Plato regarded the People:** (a) *Intellectually*.—To begin with, Plato did not even wish that all men, the rough and ready multitude, should be among his followers. True, he, like Socrates, taught openly, freely, and in public in Athens, and any one who chose might listen; but of those who would penetrate the depths of his philosophy and become his disciple in the true sense, he demanded a preliminary scientific culture. "Let none ignorant of geometry enter here," was the inscription above the door of the garden where the privileged few were allowed to meet. Hence Plato's gospel consciously addressed itself only to the cultivated. He had no notion of taking such material as uneducated fishermen or uncouth tax-gatherers—men of the people—to experiment upon. His philosophy is therefore, naturally, in the strictest sense, aristocratic and exclusive. He deliberately shuts out the majority of mankind, not, let us note, from actual intolerance, but simply because he does not think them capable of entering into his ideas. Could the great crowd, he asks, rise to the distinction between the absolute beauty, beauty in itself, and the many beautiful things which appeal to the senses? Impossible! *ergo*, the world can never be a lover of wisdom.

Whether Plato is right or wrong in his estimate of "the world" does not concern us here. A John and a Paul, nay, a CHRIST, have also something to say of the inability of the world to receive their message. The difference between Plato and these later teachers lies in this, that, whereas they pressed their message earnestly on the attention of the many, if by any means they might gain some, Plato does not concern himself about the many—they do not even come within his horizon as available material for discipleship. Jesus Christ believed in the capacity of man—man in his native simplicity, humble, rough, uneducated—to grasp the distinction between the things of eternity and the things of time; Plato did not.

(b) *Socially*.—Into the question of Plato's political views this is not the place to enter. That the democracy, however, with its license and freedom of speech, was distasteful to him by nature follows from what has been already said, and is evidenced by many passages. Moreover, there can be no doubt that Plato's natural distrust of the form of government most congenial to his fellow-citizens was largely influenced by the fact that it was the democracy that had condemned Socrates.<sup>2</sup> The death of the Master was a turning-point in the life of the other disciples. Hence the fact remains that Plato is not in touch with the political life of his day, and he consoles himself by the building of an ideal state in which the people, as a determining factor, shall be reduced to the smallest possible proportions. In this ideal state there are to be three

<sup>1</sup> Plato's "aristocratic" leanings (in the conventional sense) are evident enough in the earlier Dialogues, when he appears as a believer in the doctrine of heredity. In the *Charmides* (157, 158), for instance, he says of the youth from whom the Dialogue takes its name, that "there are no two Athenian houses the alliance of which was likely to produce a better or nobler son than the two from which" he has sprung. "Having such ancestors," he adds, "you ought to be first in all things."

But in later years Plato, however he may still cling to the scientific truth undoubtedly involved in heredity, has got over any pride of life attaching to it: witness the good-humoured ridicule poured upon the "pomp of pedigree" in the famous portrait of the true philosopher in the *Theætetus* (174, 175).

<sup>2</sup> We may just remind ourselves in passing that the philosopher found no friends among the aristocrats. We know how he fared under the rule of The Thirty.

classes—the people generally, spoken of as “traders”; a military class for the protection of the whole, designated “guardians” or “auxiliaries”; and lastly, the very few wise men, the philosophers who are to rule the whole, known as “counsellors.”

That some such division must of necessity exist in any state is evident; but the strange thing in regard to our philosopher's scheme is that the classes which of necessity form the great bulk of the citizens vanish almost entirely from his view. The many are there, it is true; but in Plato's eyes their sole *raison d'être* would seem to be simply that they may be governed, directed, ruled by the wiser few, for whom and for themselves they provide the necessities of the bodily life. That the people, the traders, are to share in the spiritual and intellectual culture so carefully thought out for their guardians and counsellors is nowhere made evident in the *Republic*. “Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die,” would seem to be a maxim good enough for the seething mass of ordinary mortality. That this is a fair inference to draw from Plato's silence as to the culture of the people may be seen by the position which he assigns them in the comparison between the body human and the body corporate—an analogy pushed, like others in Plato, much too far, but none the less instructive as to his own intention. In the great body of the state the philosopher-ruler corresponds to the head, the immortal or reasoning part, in the individual; the guardians or military class to the high-spirited portion of the soul; the great mass of the people, the traders, to the desires and appetites—the lowest and *unreasoning* part, which has to be kept strictly under control,<sup>1</sup> “held down,” lest it should overthrow the whole. Can anything be more significant?<sup>2</sup>

Amongst the one or two things in Homer which Plato commends (*Rep.*, iii. 389 E.) is the description of the silent march of the Achæans:—

“The Greeks marched breathing prowess,  
 . . . in silent awe of their leaders.”

This may fairly be taken as his ideal of the attitude of the many towards the few—political self-effacement, silent obedience combined with unquestioning faith in the judgment and wisdom of their leaders—a very necessary element in the body corporate at certain crises, we admit, but not a summary of the whole duty of man, of the humblest of citizens, whether considered as a political unit or as a social, intelligent, and religious being. “Note,” he says (*Rep.*, 431 C.), “that the manifold and complex desires and pleasures and pains are mostly found in children and women and slaves, and in the freemen so called of the lower and more numerous class. Whereas the simple and moderate desires which follow reason (*nous*) and are led by mind and true opinion are to be found only in a few, and those the best by nature (*physei*) and best educated. Very true. Do you not see that these have a place in our state, and the lower desires of the many are held down by the desires and wisdom of the more reasonable few?”

To be quite fair to Plato, however, we must always bear in mind that his “aristocracy” is meant to be, in the true sense, the rule of the best. Although the caste system plays so conspicuous a part in the ideal state, we can recognise the difference between man and man. In the parable of the metals (*Rep.*, iii.

<sup>1</sup> See the extracts from the *Timæus*, pp. 544 ff.

<sup>2</sup> “The citizens (of the ideal state), as in other Hellenic States, democratic as well as aristocratic,” says Prof. Jowett (*Introd. to the Rep.*, p. clxxii), “are really an upper class, for although no mention is made of slaves, the lower classes are allowed to fade away into the distance, and are represented in the individual by the passions.” See also the passages in our philosopher, on which the above remarks are based, in Book IV. of the *Republic*, p. 431.



415)—wherein the ruler is set forth as having an admixture of gold in his composition, the auxiliary of silver, and the husbandman or craftsman of brass or iron—he insists that the original stock is one, and thus that a golden man may chance to have a son of brass—and the brazen man may equally have a son of gold. In such a case, the brazen son is not to be allowed to rule simply because he happens to be the son of his father, the golden man—he must descend in the social scale; while, on the other hand, the golden son is not to be kept plodding in the fields because he is descended from the brazen man: he is to be transferred to the ruling class. *La carrière aux talents*!—Plato's aristocracy is thus really one of mind and intellect. Nevertheless, there is no getting over the fact, that it has no sympathy with the people. Plato's attitude towards the great mass of men at the best, is one of tolerance only. He has no message for the many. His message is carefully restricted to the few.

(2) **Plato's Views on Work and Trade.**—Closely connected with Plato's conception of the masses, are his notions concerning work and trade. The great majority of men are absolutely dependent on their own exertions for their daily bread—a determining factor which can be ignored in no system of universal application. How does Plato treat it?

At the outset with dignity and reasonableness. He lays down as the *raison d'être* of the state the fact that no man is self-sufficing (*autarkēs*). Each needs the help of others—each can contribute something welcome to others and to the general well-being. Hence in the Republic the ideal state begins with the recognition of this fundamental truth. “To secure the interchange of that which each has produced by labour is,” he says (*Rep.*, ii. 371 B.), “one of the chief objects for which we have formed them (the four or five who amalgamate) into a community, and founded a state.”

Throughout the whole account of the grounding of the state, we find stated in the clearest way the first principles of sound political economy—the necessity for work, and that on a large scale, that there may be a superfluity for purposes of export—the advantages of commerce in conveying this superfluity to the places where it is needed—the great principle of the division of labour—all are brought out in the happiest way, and even the dignity of manual labour—of the “common” work of the farmer, builder, weaver, and shoemaker—seems to be recognised, inasmuch as it contributes to the well-being of the whole.

How comes it, then, that one who has this clear perception of the actual necessity of work and of trading should nevertheless speak elsewhere of both with the most absolute contempt?

The answer to this puzzling question is, we think, to be found in Plato's “aristocratic” ideal, as we saw it in our last section. We know the attitude of Plato towards the people—the people in the body corporate correspond to the animal desires of the individual. Hence, as a natural result of such a theory, the avocations they pursue can have no higher aim than the satisfying of the bodily appetites. The aim of the philosopher, the true aristocrat, is, on the contrary, to die to these bodily appetites (*Phædo*, 63, 64), and the only work worthy of the name is the pursuit of truth.

The necessity for the manual labour of the toilers disappears from Plato's views as entirely as do the toilers themselves. However attractive the laborious life of the primitive community, as seen through the haze of the ages, may be, the same laborious life becomes quite another thing in the broad daylight of present surroundings. The planting and building, weaving and shoemaking, done as “common” contributions to the commonwealth, wear a different aspect when done for the “sordid” hope of gain, and Plato turns away in disgust from their contemplation. Forgetful of the fact that the pursuits which supply

the wants of the body are as necessary in the mature as in the infant state, he can credit those who follow them with no higher aim than the ministering to sensual cravings and the heaping up of luxuries.

The fact that in a Greek community manual labour was mainly performed by slaves, had, of course, an enormous influence on the way in which such labour came to be regarded—work *per se* was degraded by the association. Nevertheless this other fact remains, that Plato, our philosopher of philosophers, despised manual labour, whether done by slaves or by freemen, simply because it had for its object the body and the bodily wants. In no way is this more strikingly shown than by a passage in that very dialogue (the *Republic*) wherein work appears as a foundation of the state. The reader will recollect the wondrous parable of similitude wherein the soul is set forth under the image of the composite form which contains, under the guise of a human being, three different natures—those of the man, the lion, and the many-headed beast. He will recollect also that the growth of the MAN, the smallest of the three, is conditioned by his being able to keep in check the other two creatures within him. If he fails to do this, all is lost—the man, the reasoning power, is dragged helplessly hither and thither by the lion, his own wilful spirit, and the many-headed beast, his own appetites, at their pleasure. It is in this connection that Plato drags in the following allusion: “And why is it, think you,” he asks, “that the work of mechanics (*banausia*), and artisans (*cheirotechnia*), is accounted disgraceful? Can we assign any other reason for it than this, that when a man’s noblest element is weak by nature, he is unable to govern the creatures within him, and can learn only the arts of ministering to their wants and flattering them?”<sup>1</sup>

We must ask again: Can anything be more significant? As in the case of his attitude towards the people, Plato’s attitude towards the “common” everyday work of life is based on a fundamental error.

Then, as regards commerce, the outlook from the Platonic standpoint is not more hopeful. No philosopher could possibly engage in trade. Considering that the greatness of Athens—her large-mindedness and freedom from prejudice—was largely due to the enterprise of her merchants, one would have expected some appreciation of this in an Athenian.

The very reverse of this is the case with Plato. He sketches out in the *Republic*, it is true, the part played by merchants in the growth of the state, and seems to speak with a certain respect of them and their efforts; but in the *Laws* (viii. 846 *et seq.*), his ideas are so far altered that no trading whatever is to be carried on by natives—it is to be left to aliens and slaves. Trade, he admits, is not bad in itself; but it engenders the desire of gain, which again leads to extortion. Hence he who engages in it must be a stranger—not one of the favoured few in the colony for which Plato is legislating (*Laws*, xi. 918). “Touch not, taste not, handle not.” The three classes in the colony are therefore to be freemen, slaves, and craftsmen (*dēmiurgi*). Strange revolution of the opinion that the very workers-for-the-people, the *dēmiurgi*, who are hailed with welcome everywhere in Homer—those who have the precious art-in-the-hand, *cheirotechnia*—should be scouted and shut out from the society of the *eleutheroi*, the freemen, the generous!

Here, again, we must confess, Plato has no universal message. The work of the world must go on; but it was left for the Master Himself to ennoble it by the infusion of generosity—His own example. Christ perceived in the common every-day world-work a sphere for the exercise of the highest philosophy, the noblest self-sacrifice; Plato did not.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. also the remark put into the mouth of Critias the aristocrat, in the *Charmides*.



(3) **Plato's Views on Slavery.**—If the story that Plato himself was on one occasion sold into slavery is true—and there is no reason to doubt it—we should expect to find in him genuine sympathy with the lot of the most unfortunate section of an Hellenic community. Nor are we altogether disappointed. To this episode in his life is probably to be attributed his earnest pleading for Hellenes conquered in war. Hellenes, he says (*Rep.*, v. 469 E. *et seq.*), ought not to enslave one another, for they are kinsmen, one family, one race. And although he does not go on to plead for the “barbarian” under like circumstances, yet this is due to the fact that such a notion as the entire abolition of slavery would have been regarded as the height of absurdity in antiquity.

Slavery was, so to speak, one of the bases on which antique society rested. To dispense with slaves would have been considered by an Hellenic community a proceeding as impossible as, by ourselves, to dispense, not only with domestic servants, but with the great body of workers generally. Where manual labour was despised, it was only the existence of an immense number of involuntary labourers that could set the statesman and the philosopher, equally with the man of pleasure, free. Hence slaves were regarded as a kind of property indispensable to the higher interests of the community, and the only question that could arise concerning them was as to the manner in which they should be treated.

The question was by no means an easy one. Man, as Plato observes (*Laws*, vi. 777 B.), is a troublesome animal; and when you come to carry out in practice the *necessary* distinction between slave and freeman and master, he is not likely to be very easily managed, or to become so. The Lacedæmonians had found out this fact with their Helots and the conquered Messenians—the Thessalians with the Penestæ—viz. that slaves were troublesome property. As to the mode of treating them, says Plato (*ibid.*, 776 D., E.), Greek opinion is divided. All would acknowledge, he admits, that we should try to procure for ourselves slaves as well-disposed towards us, and as good as possible; for many a slave has proved better than a son or brother, and has saved his master's life and property—yea, his whole house. These stories are reported concerning slaves.

But, then, on the other hand, there are those who hold that the soul of a slave is corrupt (literally, that there is nothing healthy in it), and that no prudent man will trust himself to any one of the class. Even the wisest of poets says that—

“Thralls are no more inclined to honest service when their masters have lost the dominion, for Zeus, of the far-borne voice, takes away the half of a man's virtue, when the day of slavery comes upon him” (*Hom. Od.*, xvii. 322–323).

There being, then, these two diverse opinions concerning slaves, some will trust them in nothing, and, by punishing them like wild beasts with goads and whips, make the souls of their slaves three times, nay, many times more slavish than they were before. Others do the very reverse.

Which course, then, is to be adopted?

Plato steers a middle course. We must treat slaves well, he says, not only out of regard to them, but far more out of regard to our own self-respect. The proper course to pursue with slaves is, not to treat them with violence and contempt,<sup>1</sup> but—here Plato speaks out a noble word—to be, if possible, even more just towards them than towards our equals. He who reverences justice and hates injustice by nature (from his heart)—and not for the sake of

<sup>1</sup> *Hybris* = injury and insult.

appearances merely—is discovered in his dealings with those towards whom he could easily be unjust. He, therefore, who is free from impiety and injustice towards his slaves, will best be able to sow the seeds of virtue in them. And, he adds, this applies to all in authority—to master, ruler, every one in power over those weaker than himself.

Truly a divine maxim! It is only in Plato's practical application of it that we find the "limits."

One would naturally expect that a legislator (and Plato throughout the *Laws* speaks in the character of a legislator) who feels so keenly the necessity of doing justice to the weak, will take special precautions in regard to the class that by no possibility could make its wrongs known, or obtain redress. Throughout the enactments in the *Laws*, however, the very dialogue which contains the noble sentiment referred to, we find one law for the freeman, another for the slave. As instances, let us take the following:—

(1) If a stranger passing along the road shall help himself in ignorance to fruit that is not meant to be eaten, but to be made into wine or stored—if he be a slave, he shall be beaten; if a freeman, dismissed with an admonition (*Laws*, viii. 845).

(2) As regards treasure-trove, if a man have "taken up that which he laid not down," and another discover the matter and give information about it—the discoverer, if he be a freeman, shall have the honour of doing the right—if he do not inform, the dishonour of doing the wrong. If the discoverer be a slave and inform, the state shall give him his freedom; if he do not inform, he shall be *punished with death*. Note the difference between the treatment meted out (*Laws*, xi. 913-914).

(3) Again, he who kills his own slave (either unintentionally or without premeditation, in a fit of anger) shall undergo a purification and be free from the homicide (*Laws*, ix. 865 D.), but the slave who kills his master (also without premeditation, and in a fit of anger) shall be put to death (*ibid.*, ix. 868 B.), and the significant words are used that the kindred of the deceased shall do with him as they please, provided only that they do not spare his life (*ibid.*, 872). Or, if a slave kill a freeman not his master, he is to be given up to the kindred of the deceased, who shall be *under an obligation* to put him to death, *in whatever way they please*. It is clear from another passage describing the punishment of a slave who has premeditated a murder what the fate of the man would be. The freeman who kills his slave in a fit of anger is purified and gets off scot-free—the slave who kills his master under similar circumstances, and possibly far greater provocation, will certainly be put to death, and probably scourged to death.

With these instances of Plato's "justice" before our eyes, his noble sentiments regarding the treatment of the weak vanish into very thin air indeed. Granted that in a slave-holding community such laws were necessitated by the circumstances of the case—granted that an owner-killer must of necessity, as Plato puts it, be killed himself—and that in such a way as should act as a warning to others—if all owners were not to live in fear and trembling—this only demonstrates that, as regards those conditions of society which could create such a necessity, Plato was not in advance of his age. He admits the "necessity" and prepares the laws. Here again he has no universal message. His own famous description of the manner in which slaves should be treated in private life also proves this. It is meant as the "middle way" between the two Hellenic methods of over-severity and over indulgence previously described.

Slaves are to be *chastised* when they deserve it, and not remonstrated with



as though they were freemen, and so made conceited. Almost every word addressed to a slave should be a command; and never on any account should we jest with a slave—this is a foolish way which many people indulge in, and thereby make it more difficult both for the slave to endure the life of servitude and for the master to rule (*Laws*, vi. 777 E., *et seq.*).

*Never remonstrate with a slave*—literally, don't appeal to his reason—you will only make him conceited—*always address him with the word of command!* Here are "limits" in truth, bounds strictly defined. Imagine what Plato's amazement would have been had a runaway slave presented himself to him with a message such as that of St. Paul to Onesimus regarding Philemon (Ep. to Phil. 16)—"Receive him—no longer as a slave, but above a slave—BROTHER dearly beloved both in the flesh and in the Lord." What! the philosopher—the man representing the Divine and immortal and reasoning part of society—receive the slave—the man representing its more animal wants and desires, the man who is never to be reasoned with, but always addressed in the tone of command—as a brother, a dearly-beloved, not only socially (in the flesh) but spiritually! Admit such an one to the intellectual and spiritual franchise?—Never!—the thing is impossible, for the simple reason that from Plato's standpoint the slave is not capable of understanding his message. Between the freeman and the slave, as between the philosopher and the multitude, there is a great gulf fixed, and Plato is not the man to bridge it. It was left for the Master Himself to solve this tremendous problem of antiquity. He alone saw into the dumb oppressed "slavish" soul, and gauged its capacities. "Art thou called being a slave? Care not for it. Thou art the Lord's freeman!" Christ alone is the true champion of the weak. He alone has meted out true justice between man and man. He alone established one law and one standard for master and for slave—from Him alone, and from no philosopher or system of philosophy did the world receive its charter of freedom! for in Christ Jesus there is neither master nor servant, bond nor free—all are equal before Him (Gal. iii. 28).

(4) *Plato's Conception of Women*.—"Now," says the lover of Plato, "here at least your 'limits' stop—here you must acknowledge our philosopher to be ages in advance of his age. If Plato is not the champion of the slave, you cannot deny his claim to be, at any rate, the first advocate of the rights of women."

Let us look into this "claim." Plato certainly devoted a great deal of his attention to the position of women, but whether it be correct or not to designate him an advocate of their rights, an impartial examination of his opinions only can reveal.

(a) *Plato's general Attitude towards Women*.—In the first place then, we recall the well-known utterance with which we are already acquainted. "I have reason," Plato is reported to have said (*Lactant., Div. Inst.*, iii., xix. 17), "to thank Heaven for much; but especially that I came into the world as a human being, and not as an animal; as a man and not as a woman; as a Hellene, and not as a barbarian." Here the human being, the man, and the Hellene are opposed to the animal, the woman, and the barbarian. As this saying, however, is attributed also to Thales and to Socrates (*Diog. Lært.*, i. 33), we need not lay too much stress upon it—beyond pointing out that the mere fact of its being put into the mouth of Plato is significant, as showing the opinion of antiquity in regard to the general drift of his views.

(b) *The Origin and Nature of Women*.—When we turn, however, to what is now admitted to be undoubtedly Platonic, we find a startling light thrown on the "I thank God that I did not come into the world as a woman." Why

this fervent thanksgiving? Because, says Plato in the *Timæus*, a woman *represents a failure*. A woman is a man who has failed in his first life-probation, and sinks in the second birth into the form of a woman. "Of the men who come into the world," says our philosopher, "those *who are cowards, or have led unjust lives*, may be fairly supposed to change into the nature of women in the second birth" (*Tim.*, 428). Shade of Antigone, of Iphigenia! see here to what, in the esteem of philosophy, you are fallen! If the soul falls into this second probation, continues the master, it sinks into the form of an animal.

Women, then, according to the highest wisdom of antiquity, are a sort of cross between the man and the animal. In Plato's view, women are not included in the number of the elect souls sown at the beginning in the stars—the souls who are to be the most religious of beings—the souls about whom the Creator is said to have taken special care that all should have the same start, the same chance, that none should suffer damage at His hands. From this special care women are expressly shut out; they do not, in Plato's opinion, start on an equality with men; they have no free choice; they are simply the *recipients and inheritors of a failure*. We ask again: Can anything be more significant?

(c) *The Social Equality of Women*.—"You are extremely unjust to Plato," says our enthusiast hotly. "Why quote a work like the *Timæus*, a work abounding in all sorts of curious fancies, a mere outgrowth of his system? Go to the sun and centre of it—the *Republic*—and see there Plato's ideas about women! Does he not maintain that they are in every respect to be on an equality with men, to receive the same education and training, to take part not only in war but in the highest of all earthly dignities, the government of the state itself? So far from finding 'limits' here, an 'impartial' critic will find Plato to be, as we maintained, ages in advance even of us moderns. What have you to say to all this? Is it not true?"

It is. Plato's eye was too keen not to detect the enormous injury done to the state by the prevailing customs and opinions regarding women, not to see the immense benefit that would accrue to it from such an access of strength as must result from the cultivation of the neglected half of society. In this true insight, Plato is indeed a pioneer and a path-breaker. Where, then, do you find his "limits"? says our opponent triumphantly.

We find his "limit" in this, that Plato's highest conception of women in the *Republic*, as in the *Timæus*, is still that of the inferior man; we find his "mistake" not only in this *a priori* conception, but in the reasons given for introducing women to public life.

**Proofs.**—Plato's conception of the relation of the sexes in the *Republic* (v. 455 D.) is as follows: "There is no business of the state," he says, "which a woman can manage simply as woman, nor that a man can manage simply as man, but the gifts of nature are distributed alike in both. The woman shares in all pursuits by nature as does the man; but *in all* the woman is weaker than the man."

"In all, the woman is weaker than the man"—a statement supplemented in the *Laws* (vi. 805) by the assertion that "in *virtue* the woman is inferior to the man." Here is Plato's "limit." Here we part company with him. The woman is undoubtedly weaker than the man in many pursuits of life; but is it not true that in many she is stronger, aye, and these not the mere "making of pancakes and hotch-potch," in which he is willing (*ibid.*, 455 C.) to accord to her a certain superiority.

**His Reasons for the Enfranchisement of Women.**—(a) Do not suppose that Plato desires women to share the pursuits of men because he has



noticed that woman are the complement of men and have capacities which supplement those of men. Not so! our philosopher is a great observer, but he has not observed this. He has, however, watched the animals and found out that the female takes her part equally in everything with the male (*Rep.*, v. 451 E.). Why not apply the same rule to the human animal? So far the *Republic*. In the *Laws*, our philosopher goes a step farther. By making the women share the pursuits of the men, he says, the state will not be robbed of half its legitimate service. Under the prevailing system the state, instead of being a whole, is reduced to a half, while it has the same imposts to pay and the same toils to undergo. Let the legislator, then, insist on the women doing their part, and not allow them to live on in sloth and luxury (*Laws*, vii. 805, 806 C.).

We commend to the notice of our enthusiast the refinement and generosity underlying these reasons for admitting women to public life. The bearing and rearing of future citizens is not a sufficient contribution to the commonwealth; in addition, the woman must now take her full half of the man's work. The female animal does it—*ergo*, why not the female human animal? *À bas le sentiment—vive l'utilitarianisme!*

Is there a trace here of the highest modern ideal of woman—of woman as the “diviner” man, man free from thought of self, a ministering angel? We trow not. And whence the change in thought and opinion concerning woman? Again, is it not due to the deeper penetration of the MASTER? Jesus Christ placed no “limit” to the development of woman. In his eyes woman possesses that first start, that right of choice, equally with man, is equally capable of exercising it: “Mary hath *chosen* that good part, and it shall not be taken from her.” The free self-determining power—denied to woman in antiquity by philosophy as by custom—was restored to her by Jesus Christ. But while we thus briefly point out the “limits” of Plato's conception of women, we are equally bound to point out that, in two respects at least, Plato still acts as a pioneer on this very subject:—

(a) One of the most fruitful elements in the modern education of women moves on strictly Platonic lines. Plato enforces his reasons for teaching women to bear arms by the argument that they would thus be able to defend their city in the enforced absence of the fighting men on a campaign. Women should be instructed in tactics and the use of arms, so as to know what to do in the event of an attack on the city from either barbarians or Hellenes. “Great,” he says (*Laws*, vii. 814), “would be the disgrace to the state if the women had been so shamefully trained that they could not fight for their children—as birds will for their nestlings against the strongest creature, die and face any danger—but must rush to the temples and crowd at all the altars and shrines, and bring upon the human race the reproach that of all animals man is the most cowardly.”

Here is a challenge to the women of Hellas—to women for all time! In our day it has been bravely taken up, for it is the application of this argument to the conditions of modern life that has reversed the mistaken and ridiculous notions regarding the employment of women current not so long ago among ourselves. People have now the common sense to see that any pursuit honourable in a man is equally honourable in a woman, if it renders her *independent*, and able to fight the battle of life for herself and those who have claims upon her.

(b) Secondly, in the recognition of efforts made by women, Plato is vastly more generous than, until very recently, was modern society. In him there is no trace of the grudging spirit that would keep back the public recognition

of intellectual distinction from a woman, simply because she was a woman. Both in the *Republic* (vii. 540) and in the *Laws* (802) women are to be honoured as they deserve equally with men. For this, women may indeed be grateful to Plato, and accord to him, so far, the title claimed for him by our enthusiast; in this respect Plato was certainly the first advocate of their rights.

**Plato's Communism.**—No feature of Plato's ideal state is at once so attractive and so absolutely repulsive as that which must now engage our attention, the communism which he desires to introduce. The object he proposes to himself is one to gladden the heart of God, the scheme whereby he seeks to render it practicable, well-nigh unnameable.

Plato's object here as everywhere is the attainment of harmony in civil and social life. The troubles which beset existing civilisation were not unknown in the fourth century before Christ. The conditions of life might be less complex, but the root of the matter, human nature, was the same. The unceasing and never-to-cess diversity of talents, opportunities, and use-made-of-opportunities, existed then as now, and then as now the classes and the masses confronted each other. Plato has observed (*Rep.*, iv. 422 E.) that "Every city, however small it may be, contains within itself two cities—the city of the poor and the city of the rich. These," he adds, "are at war with one another, and in each of these two great divisions there are again many smaller ones," produced by the different associations or the different temperaments of men.

All this is to be obviated, for in the ideal state there will be neither poverty nor wealth, and Plato speaks out the noble word that the very aim of the state is, not the happiness of any one class preferred before others, but *the greatest possible happiness of the whole* (*Rep.*, iv. 420). How is this to be attained? By leading the individual units of the state to consider themselves simply as members of the great whole, and he illustrates his meaning by the famous simile of the body and its members. "When a man has hurt his finger," says Plato, "the whole community of the body, drawn towards the soul as its centre, and forming, as it were, one kingdom under her leadership, becomes aware of it, and together feels the pain of the part injured, so that we say, 'The man feels the pain in his finger' . . . so when any one of her citizens experiences either good or evil the (ideal) state will say that the experience is *hers*, and all will rejoice or sorrow together" (*Rep.*, v. 462 C. *et seq.*). Could any conception be grander or more noble? Here, indeed, Plato touches God, here he anticipates with true prophetic insight the very ideal proposed to Himself by Jesus Christ, "that they all may be *One*" (St. John xvii.).

When we turn, however, to the method by which Plato seeks to realise this grand ideal, we are painfully reminded that we have to do with gropings in the darkness as well as with Divine anticipations; Plato's scheme for bringing about this "common" unity of feeling is, perhaps, the most serious error in judgment ever committed by any thoughtful man. It is nothing less than the abolition of all private interests, of everything belonging to the individual as such, the merging of all in the state. To abolish ownership in any shape is an error almost inconceivable in one belonging to a nation of experimenters, for with the cessation of individual proprietorship individual effort must also cease. But this first error leads on to one still more fatal: if the distinction of "mine and not mine" is to be logically done away with, everything must come within its range, nothing may escape its application, and not only my property, but my home, my wife, my husband, my children, must cease to exist. Never was principle more ruthlessly developed than the communism of Plato. What he proposes is nothing less than that for family-life shall be



substituted a community of wives and children. Marriage is to become simply a department of the state.

We may note in passing that this great blot on Plato's pure ideal proceeds not only from his communistic notions, but in part also from his conception of women as already described. If women are only "weaker men," they are certainly not entitled to have or to hold a separate sphere of their own. Family-life and the home are abolished (or rather abolish themselves) of necessity. If women are to take their full share of public duties, they must live in public, their whole time is to be devoted to the service of the state, the so-called "domestic" duties, the rearing and training of children, must of necessity be relegated to officers appointed by the state.

Thus by a combination of two fatal errors, Plato cuts at the very roots of his own tree of life, for he does away with the home and the family, the unit of the state, the *fons et origo* of all healthful state-life. Truly, the singer of the true wedded love of Hector and Andromache, of Odysseus and Penelope, the painter of the sweet and wise wife and mother, Arête, of the sweeter daughter, Nausicaa, Homer, the slighted poet, was avenged with a vengeance when Plato, the philosopher, committed himself to this astounding scheme. Fortunately for society, the sturdy common sense of society recognised here in the poet a guide truer and wiser far than the philosopher.

We need waste no words upon the scheme itself, still less need we pour the vials of our wrath upon the philosopher who propounded it. Plato must not be judged by any ordinary standard; he has no mean or ignoble end in view—the very reverse. Marriage is to be made as holy as possible; it is not to be entered into as a matter of personal choice, but solely for the good of the state. For this reason, individual preferences are to be subordinated to outside guidance, the will of the legislator, who will assign to each disposition and temperament its right and fitting correlative and corrective, and so bring about the improvement of the race. How utterly impracticable (even were it desirable) all this is, needs no demonstration.

(6) *Plato's Humanity*.—We are often told that humanity had no existence in antiquity, and if we add the explanation, "humanity," in its largest sense—love for man as man, the statement is true. To say, however, that the people who coined the word "phil-anthropy," used it without a meaning, would be to say what is manifestly unfair. Plato, at least, had a true sense of humanity—within certain limits—witness his rules for the conduct of war and his ideal state.

(1) No Hellene, he says (*Rep.*, v. 469 B. *et seq.*), is to be held as a slave by the state, and in war Hellenic cities are not to be enslaved either by our state or any other, if we can prevent it—so that all Hellenic states may present a united front to the common enemy, the barbarian. War between Hellenic states is not war, but variance or discord, inasmuch as it is a quarrel between friends—the name "war" is to be kept for the contest with the barbarian.

(2) The bodies of the dead are not to be stripped on the battlefield, except of their armour. Is it not ungenerous and avaricious to plunder the dead? says Plato; and is it not mean and womanish (!) to regard the body of the slave as an enemy, when the real enemy has flown away, and left behind him only that in which he fought? Is not such conduct like that of dogs which are angry at the stones that are thrown at them, but don't touch the thrower?

(3) Spoils—least of all those taken from Hellenes—are not to be offered as gifts, boastfully, in the temples, if good feeling with other Hellenes is to be kept up—in the fear that what has been taken from kinsmen may be a pollution, unless commanded by the god himself. (This after the Peloponnesian War, and the bitter struggles recorded by Thucydides.)

(4) No horrors of war are to be perpetrated in Hellenic lands—the country is not to be devastated, nor the cities burned, nor all alike, men, women and children, reckoned as enemies. Why? Because the Hellenic races are related; they form one family. All Greeks are kinsmen, while the barbarian is a stranger and a foreigner. War among Hellenes is only discord among kinsmen, Hellenes will be friendly correctors of their kinsmen (*sophronistæ* = trying to bring them to a right mind); they will not be stern chastisers, bringing slavery and ruin upon them.

It is evident from the foregoing that Plato has a very clear understanding of “humanity”—he will not even wound the feelings, much less the bodies of his “kinsmen”; but the limits, of course, are equally evident.

(1) *Treatment of the Barbarian*.—These humane rules are to be observed as regards the treatment of the Hellenes. As for the “barbarians” (a name which includes every race under the sun except the Greeks)—they are to be treated “as the Hellenes now treat one another”—that is, the burning, destroying, pillaging and enslaving—are left in full force. All the horrors of war may freely be perpetrated when the object is neither kith nor kin to Hellas.

(2) *Treatment of the Sick*.—Again, when we come to a class at all times numerous in every community—the incurable, the helplessly sick, those in whom modern society takes a special and pitiful interest—what is Plato’s attitude towards them? He places them, poor wretches, in the same category as the incurably bad. In the ideal state, he says, “Medicine and law will take care of such citizens as are of a good nature in soul and body. Those who are not so in body, they will leave to die; those who have corrupt and incurable souls they will themselves put to death” (*Rep.*, iii. 410).

(3) *Treatment of Weakly Children*.—In the *Republic* (v. 460 C.) it is enacted that the children of the state-made marriages before mentioned are to be taken away from their mothers immediately after birth, and handed over by the proper officers to the nurses, who shall dwell in a separate quarter of the city. But, note, the children of parents inferior in any way, or children themselves deformed, are not to be brought up—they are to be “put away in a secret and unknown place.” Plato can doubtless plead to this monstrous law the authority of Spartan custom, but it is some consolation to think that he himself was ashamed of it, for in the *Timæus* it is quietly withdrawn. The rule applies only to the children of the two highest classes (the rulers and guardians) and in the cases alluded to it is said in the *Timæus* that the children are to be—not destroyed, but distributed secretly amongst the lower classes of the community.

Add to the foregoing, Plato’s laws for the punishment of slaves, and we shall see how far the noblest thinker of antiquity was from the Christian standard of “humanity.”

(6) *The Isolation of the Philosopher*.—Hitherto we have been considering Plato’s relation to those with whom he was out of sympathy, either wholly or partially—the masses, the toiler, the trader, the slave, the woman, the barbarian. Now let us turn to the class with whom he was actually in touch. Let us look at the effect of his teaching upon those whom he understood, and with whom he was in fullest, most generous sympathy—the seekers after truth, the lovers of wisdom, the philosophers. And here it is abundantly clear from what has already been said, that Plato’s was an isolating policy—outwardly, for his philosopher is a stranger, not only to the feasts and the rivalries of men, but to the agora, the law-courts, the senate, and all the busy haunts of life (*Theæt.*, 173)—and yet more inwardly, for his thoughts are to be constantly turned upon himself—in the noblest way, certainly, for it is the care of the soul



—the daily dying, the preparation of the soul for her release, the adorning of the soul with her own proper jewels—that is to occupy him (*Phædo*, 81, 114 C. *et seq.*).

Granted the beauty and sublimity of Plato's method, it cannot be denied that its ultimate tendency was to render the philosopher self-centred, and to withdraw him from intercourse and sympathy with his fellows. This being so, it stands self-condemned as one-sided, wanting in balance, and therefore tending to defeat its own object. Let Plato himself bear witness to this. In the famous picture of the philosopher in the *Theætetus*, he says: "Just as Thales, while gazing at the stars and looking upwards, fell into a well, and a clever and witty Thracian handmaid jested and said that in his eagerness to know what was in heaven, he did not know what was before him at his very feet—so the same jest is applicable to all who spend their lives in philosophy. For, in truth, such an one does not know his next-door neighbour—either what he is about—or, indeed, whether he is a man, or some other creature. But as to what man is, and what it beseems such a nature to do, or to suffer different from any other—into this he inquires—*this* he investigates with all pains and troubles." The witty Thracian handmaid had certainly, by Plato's own showing, some foundation for her impertinence.

If the philosopher stops short at himself, and "investigates with all pains and trouble" only his own *ego*, and how he is ever to arrive at a right estimate of the universal and many-sided creature MAN, would not his old master, Socrates, have bid even a Plato distrust this mode of pursuing the inquiry? It might answer in the hands of a Plato, but how about the crowd of smaller men who tried to walk in his steps?

True, in the *Republic* Plato's philosopher is not allowed to keep his wisdom or his acquirements to himself. The man who has been converted, released from his chain and turned round towards one light—the man who has himself made the steep and toilsome ascent of the hill of God—must descend again into the cave of the world, and seek to enlighten and persuade his brethren (*Rep.*, vii. 519 C. *et seq.*). He is not to be suffered to dwell apart, fancying that he has already arrived at the Islands of the Blessed. No one class in the ideal state is to be happy above the rest, and therefore the philosopher-ruler is to take his share of the burden of governing—a living, active share in the moulding and guiding of the state. He alone will make a good and wise ruler, for he alone is unselfish, single-eyed, despising the ambitions and honours of men. Plato's *ideal* here again touches very nearly the Christian standard. Wherein then are its limits to be found?

(1) First, in this, that the object of Plato's philosopher in taking office is not wholly unselfish—if *he* does not take the reins he will certainly find himself subject to men inferior to himself. This is the penalty for indifference to the good of the commonwealth.

(2) Secondly, in this, that the entire self-sacrifice which the highest Christian standard demands never occurs to Plato. His philosopher will willingly take his turn in the dark underground—*i.e.* in managing state-affairs, because the greater part of his time will be passed in the light—*i.e.* in self-improvement (*Rep.*, 520 D.).

(3) Thirdly, in this, that Plato's ideal of the philosopher directing, ruling, and taking an active part in life's duties exists in theory only. Plato does not expect to see it realised. The truest lover of wisdom he had ever known—the man who had seen the light, and had gone down persistently into the cave and sought to persuade his brethren there—had been judicially murdered;

and Plato anticipates no better fate than that of Socrates for any other who ventures to *be*, and not to seem, just.

Hence, his philosopher, when he has delivered his message, has delivered his own soul—the world must go its own way, he will go his—the two utterly part company.

The lover of wisdom in Plato's time found himself, he says, in the position of "a man who has fallen among wild beasts, and is neither willing to commit wickedness with them, nor, singly, to resist all their fierce natures" (*Rep.*, vi. 496 D.). What is a man to do in such a case? He sees that before he could help either the state or his friends he would probably lose his own life, and thus do good neither to himself nor others. "Taking all this into consideration," says Plato, "he holds his peace, and does his own work (= goes his own way). He is like one who in a storm retires behind a wall from the dust and sleet of the driving wind; seeing others filled to the full with lawlessness, he is content if by any means he himself may live his life here pure from unrighteousness and unholy deeds, and depart, when the time of his release comes, with a bright hope, in peace and good-will."

Do we blame Plato if, like the man fallen among wild beasts, he seeks first his own safety? Do we blame him for retiring behind the wall? Certainly not. The whole passage in its hopefulness represents the general opinion of the nobler minds of antiquity. To regenerate the mass of mankind was a task beyond any human power, and we need not condemn Plato if he frankly abandons it. The *apostasis* of his philosopher, however—the retiring from active efforts among men—would be simply apostasy in the Christian.

*Summary.*—Very briefly we have glanced at the "limits" of a noble mind. We have dealt with Plato as he himself dealt with Homer. Great as are our love and veneration for Plato, we say with him, "Truth is greater than any man—therefore truth must be spoken." Do we thereby make void his claim to be a Divine fore-runner? God forbid! If it had been possible for man to be saved by philosophy, the philosophy of Plato would have saved him. But philosophy, as we have seen, only touched the fringe of the question—the great heart of society never throbbed and stirred under Plato's influence. He approached society as a stranger, from the outside. When the true enthusiasm for man *quâ* man was aroused, it showed itself in a way diametrically opposed to the method of Plato. The heaven began to work in the very midst of human society—it did not, like philosophy, stand outside it. It began, too, with the classes of society from which philosophy stood most aloof—gathering up the skirts of her garments lest contact with them should defile her. The toilers, the traders, the publican and tax-gatherer, the slaves, the barbarian, the hopelessly sick, the fallen—these were the first to hear the universal message, to be transformed, purified, renewed by the energising of the sweet and gracious mind of Jesus Christ *in their midst*.

What philosophy could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, did, that the righteousness so nobly foreshadowed by philosophy might become an accomplished fact, and that not in one privileged class alone, the few, but in all. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." Here is the universal message, the universal charter, towards the fulfilment of which mankind is slowly working its way—Jesus Christ still *in the midst*.



### § XIII.—ARISTOTLE—THE “METAPHYSIC”

- I. THE LADDER OF KNOWLEDGE. II. WISDOM THE KNOWLEDGE OF CAUSES.  
III. CHARACTERISTICS OF ARISTOTLE. IV. DEFINITIONS. V. THE  
LADDER OF INQUIRY.

**The “Metaphysic” of Aristotle.**—The *Metaphysic* of Aristotle is only a fragment, and of its thirteen books not all are considered genuine. As a whole, in the form in which it has come down to us, it has probably been patched and put together by some later hand. Nevertheless, certain portions are undoubtedly the work of Aristotle, and these for our inquiry are of the highest importance and value.

To all the genuine works of Aristotle is prefixed a short introduction, ushered in by some pithy saying which may be taken as the keynote to the whole. The *Metaphysic* is no exception to this rule, for before it stand the words, “All men by nature desire knowledge”—a saying which, simple as it seems, is nevertheless from its position—graven, as it were, above Aristotle’s search after God—full of the deepest meaning. To Aristotle the thirst for knowledge is the thirst for God. This will become apparent if we follow in the track of his thoughts.

**I. The Ladder of Knowledge.**—1. “All men by nature desire knowledge”—literally, all men by nature stretch towards knowledge, reach out to it, grasp after it (*oregontai*). That this is the case is, he says, proved by the value which we place upon our natural senses, and above all on the sense of sight. Even if we do not specially need our sight for the carrying out of some practical undertaking, we still set the utmost store by it. Why? Because sight is the channel whereby, most of all, we get to know things, become acquainted with the individual objects around us. By perception, the use of our senses, we stand, as it were, upon the first rung of the ladder of knowledge.

2. But we must go up higher—other creatures possess the senses as well as man, and use them too. Other creatures have sight and hearing, some have intelligence, and some have memory; but man does not live by these alone. He has a something in which other creatures can have but a small share, viz. experience. Now experience proceeds from memory, but it is memory directed by the reasoning power. Man observes a certain thing time after time, makes a dozen experiments by the aid of his senses, forgets them not, and gradually there grows out of his experiments—out of many recollections bearing on the first experiment—that which we call experience, that which constitutes the second rung of the ladder of knowledge.

3. Still, we cannot remain standing; we must go higher yet. Experience is all very well, a noble and good thing in its way, but it is confined to the individual. He has the “knack,” as we say, of observing things or doing things; but, unfortunately, he cannot pass on that “knack” to others, any more than he can lend them his own keen eyesight or the dexterity acquired by long practice.

The next step in the ascent, then, requires something more even than the intelligent use of perception and memory—it demands a higher use of the

reasoning power, even a looking below the surface, a generalising and seeking into causes. And the man who seeks into causes has attained the third rung of the ladder, and stands on the secure resting-place of *technē*—art. “Experience,” says Aristotle, “is the knowledge of individual things, art of things in general.” Herein lies the difference between man and man, between the master-builder and the workman. The one knows the causes of things, the other does not. The workman who is content to do his work mechanically, the *cheirotechnes* who has art only in the hand, is on a level with soulless things—he does his work from habit, custom (*ethos*); as the fire does its work, from something in its nature, *i.e.* because it cannot help itself. There is no credit due to either of them. This is the reason of our honouring the architect above his labourers: they know *what*; he knows *why*. The master-builder has not been content with the “rule of thumb” knowledge of experience; he has dived beneath the surface, reasoned from one set of individual experiences to another; he has generalised and so detected the first principles and the causes of his operations, and he has thereby created an art.

And not only so; he has also become a benefactor of the race, for by the discovery of the first principles of his art, he is in a position to hand them on to others, and bid them adapt and develop them in circumstances where experience is lacking. In other words, he has become a teacher, and opened up the path of progress. A little later Aristotle speaks the grand words, which ought to ring in our own ears, “*They teach, who explain the causes of things,*” and *they only*. None others are teachers in the true sense; let them profess what they may.

We have made considerable progress in our ascent of the ladder of knowledge—from perception by the senses to the knowledge of experience, from the knowledge of experience to the development of art, from the development of art to its universal diffusion by the teacher. Is there anything higher than the third of these three grades:—

Perception by the senses,  
Experience,  
Art?

There is, for Aristotle proceeds to discriminate between art and art, between knowledge and knowledge, between science and science; and above all art, knowledge, and science he places what he calls wisdom = *Sophia*—that knowledge which has to do with certain causes and first principles.

**II. What is Wisdom?**—Every art, as we have seen, has its first principles and causes—to which of them are we to give the name of wisdom?

There are several marks, says Aristotle, current even in the received notions concerning wisdom and the wise man, which may help us to answer the question. Briefly (with Aristotle’s own comments), these marks are:—

1. Wisdom is that which has to do with the universal, thus embracing the particular (and as we may say in modern language, avoiding one-sidedness).

2. “Wisdom” is, even in popular esteem, that which is hardest for men to understand. It is impossible, therefore, that it can be perception by the senses since this is common to all. “Wisdom” is farthest from such knowledge, for what it deals with is not to be perceived by the senses (not to be seen, grasped, heard, touched or handled).

3. Wisdom is, also in popular esteem, that which is exact. In every department of knowledge we regard him as the wise man who goes to work with the greatest accuracy, and who is—



4. Able to teach, for teaching consists in giving the causes of things, and “wisdom” is that which has to do with causes.

5. Wisdom is, again, and here we approach the true Aristotelian definition—that which is sought *for itself alone*, and not for the sake of any material advantage.

6. Finally, “wisdom” is that which, even in popular esteem, enables a man to rule and guide others—a faculty which, according to Aristotle, springs from discerning the object for which everything is to be done, and this object is nothing less than the good (*ἡ ἀγαθόν*) in everything, and the best (*τὸ ἀρίστον*) in nature as a whole.

“Wisdom” then has to do with causes, for the good = the object belongs to the causes.<sup>1</sup> It has nothing to do with mere utility, for it sprang at the first from wonder—astonishment at the mysteries of nature—and this wonder proceeds from the feeling of ignorance, leading on to inquiry—the search into causes, and this inquiry first began when all the material necessities and even the enjoyments of life were already provided for—when men had leisure to think and to reflect. So, in Egypt, mathematical science began with the priests, the body of men who had most of that precious thing, leisure—therefore, Aristotle dwells upon the fact that “wisdom is that which is sought for itself alone.”

“It is the only freeman among the sciences.” All the other sciences conduce to some practical end, as slaves minister to a master; but the knowledge of causes exists by and for itself.

Hence, continues Aristotle, some may be disposed to agree with Simonides, the old poet, when he says that such knowledge (that of causes) befits not man—it is the meed of honour of God alone to know the causes of things; and verily, if the poets speak truth, and the Divinity is jealous, then here indeed is the very case in which they would be jealous touching the possession of this precious knowledge of causes. “But,” says Aristotle, nobly vindicating at once the honour of God, and the honour which He has conferred on the intellect of man—“It is not possible for the Divinity to be jealous.”<sup>2</sup> As the proverb says, “The poets tell many falsities.”

This knowledge is necessarily the most precious of all—for what is most Divine is also most precious, and it has two distinguishing marks.

1. It is that knowledge which most of all belongs to God.

2. Its subject must be the Divine.

Such is Aristotle's definition of *sophia* = wisdom.

**The Highest Step in the Ladder of Knowledge.**—In the Fifth Book of the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle reverts again to that ladder of knowledge which we have climbed so far with him in the First Book, and proceeds to divide all knowledge that requires thought (or participates in thought, *dianoētikē*) into three great branches:—

1. *Productive Knowledge* (*poiētikē*), the principle of which is mind (*nous*), or art (*technē*), or some other power of faculty (*dynamis*).

2. *Practical Knowledge* (*praktikē*), in which the principle is deliberate resolve, some ethical motive.

3. *Contemplative Knowledge* (*theōretikē*), springing from reflection, observation, and the exercise of the reasoning power.

Of these three, the last, contemplative knowledge—stands highest in Aristotle's esteem, inasmuch as it is pursued for itself alone, for the sake of know-

<sup>1</sup> See further, below.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Plato's noble assertion in the *Timæus*: “God willed that all should be as like unto Himself as possible” (*ante*, p. 548).

ing, not for any mercenary or material advantage; and he proceeds to divide it again into three great classes:—

(a) *Physics*, the contemplation of *physis*=nature, the science that has for its subject things which are not immovable (not eternal, but passing away) and which cannot be separated from matter (*hylē*).

(b) *Mathematics*, the science that has for its subject things which are indeed immovable (numbers), but which, like the things of nature, also cannot be separated from matter. They are, as it were, in matter (*en hylē*).

(c) *The First Philosophy* (*prōtē philosophia*), the science that has to do with things which are immovable, eternal, and separated from matter.

"Of necessity," comments Aristotle on the last class, "all causes must be eternal, but especially these; for these (invisible, eternal, immaterial things) are the causes of the visible Divine things (*i.e.* the heavens)." "There are, therefore," he continues, "three branches of the contemplative philosophy—physics, mathematics, and theology (the science that contemplates the Divine). For it is clear that if the Divine exists anywhere, it must exist in this Nature (eternal and separate from matter, or the things of sense), and that knowledge which has to do with what is most worthy of honour must itself be most worthy of honour. The contemplative sciences, then," he concludes, "are to be preferred before the others, and of these the first in rank is theology (the science of God)."

**Summary.**—Aristotle's Ladder of Knowledge may be briefly tabulated thus, beginning with the lowest and ascending to the highest:—

I. The knowledge derived through the senses.

II. The knowledge derived from experience.

III. The knowledge derived from the reasoning power and thought, crystallising itself into art (*technē*), or science (*epistēmē*).

Thought-knowledge, again, divides itself into three branches:—

A. Productive knowledge.

B. Practical knowledge.

C. Contemplative knowledge.

Contemplative knowledge, finally, ascending through—

1. Physical knowledge, and

2. Mathematical knowledge

reaches the highest object to which the human mind can attain in

3. Theology—the knowledge of God, the only true "freeman" among the sciences.

Have we not here, as it were, an Hellenic comment on the prophetic words<sup>1</sup>—"Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might . . . but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, saith the Lord."

True, we can hardly ascribe to Aristotle the full knowledge that forms the kernel of the prophet's thought. Nevertheless, Aristotle, too, had his vision of God, and we shall presently go on to behold it as best we may through the vista of the ages.

Before entering upon our examination of Aristotle's conception of the Divine nature, however, we must pause to emphasise what has already become apparent to us—the fact, namely, that to him God is knowledge, or, in other words, to Aristotle the knowledge of God is the highest of the sciences. Hence his is what we may venture to call the scientific conception of God. Plato's conception is that of the poet-philosopher; Aristotle's that of the

<sup>1</sup> Jeremiah ix. 23, 24.



scientific philosopher—the man who will not be carried away by his imagination, but demands clearly reasoned proof at every step. It behoves us therefore, (1) to learn something of the character of Aristotle as a man of science, and (2) to make ourselves acquainted with the meaning in which he uses certain scientific or philosophical terms. Neither of these preliminary inquiries presents any great difficulties. Aristotle reveals himself and his character clearly, as does every great writer, in his works, and both the general language in which he expresses his thoughts and the special terminology peculiar to himself, are clear, definite, and precise to a degree.

**III. The Characteristics of Aristotle as a Man of Science.**—We now pass on to group together briefly the leading characteristics which distinguish him in relation to his work—*i.e.* his own special mental attitude in regard to it.

First, then, let us note that Aristotle is an upholder of two things which the sophistical teachers of his day, as of Plato's, held to be opposed. They maintained (1) that because things are constantly changing and passing away—flowing on with the river of Heracleitus<sup>1</sup>—therefore there is no such thing as positive knowledge or truth, and (2) they declared, as the natural outcome of this doctrine, that it did not signify what opinions a man held, or indeed, whether he professed any definite beliefs at all. Was not one man's opinion as good as another's?

Against such teaching Aristotle steadfastly set his face. "If what every one says is true," he argues, "then there is no distinction between true and false," and the consequences of such confusion of thought are most grievous. Aristotle held, (1) as strongly as did Plato, that there is an objective truth outside of, and distinct from, a man's "private judgment" on the matter; and (2) that it is a man's duty to form an opinion and educate his judgment in regard to that truth.

"If," he says, "a man has no definite opinion, and belief and unbelief are alike to him, how does he differ from the plants?"

2. Then, secondly, we find that Aristotle is in the truest sense of the word a teacher, faithful to that definition of his with which we are already familiar: "They are the teachers who explain the causes." Aristotle can be satisfied with no surface-work—to the best of his ability he goes straight to causes and first principles, and strives to penetrate into the very roots of things. In the *Prior Analytics* (I., xxx. 2) he uses an expression very characteristic of himself when he speaks of "hunting first principles" (*thēreuein archas*)—chasing them with the eagerness of a hunter intent on his prey. And the reason is that (as he tells us in the *Ethics*, I., vii. 21), first principles have great influence (*ropē*) on the course of an inquiry—literally, they "turn the scale" in the argument. As the proverb says, continues Aristotle, "The beginning is more than half of the whole," or, as we may put it—"A good start is more than half the race;" and hence we cannot be too zealous in our pursuit of first principles, or too careful in having them clearly defined.

3. Nevertheless, although Aristotle is thus urgent in insisting on a man's having definite opinions, and thus eager in hunting out first principles, he clearly sees that there are certain limits which cannot be overstepped. We cannot go back and back indefinitely. There are certain facts which *must* be taken for granted. "We must not," he says in the *Ethics* (I. vii. 21), "demand the cause equally and alike in all things. In some things it is enough that the fact be well established, as is the case with first principles. Now the fact (itself) is a first point and principle. But some principles are perceived

<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, p. 545.

by inference,<sup>1</sup> some by intuition,<sup>2</sup> others by a sort of habit of the mind,<sup>3</sup> and in short, different principles in different ways." We must try to follow after each of these in the natural way—that is, not demand a proof which from the very nature of the thing in question cannot be given.

And again, in the *Metaphysics*, he says of those would-be philosophers who demand proof of things which form in themselves the basis of proof, that by this demand they only show their own want of acquaintance with logic (*Met.* iii. 1005 b 2).

4. Further, let us emphasise again a point already noted—Aristotle is no nature-worshipper. Fascinated and deeply engrossed as he was by his investigations into nature, he yet assigns to these, as we have seen, only the third highest place in the ladder of knowledge. Elsewhere (*Met.* iii. 1005 a, 33 seq.) he says, "There is something which is still higher than the knowledge of nature (for Nature is only one department of being), that knowledge which has to do with the universal and the first substance or essence (*protē ousia*). The knowledge of nature is a kind of wisdom (*sophia tis*), but it is not the first."

Certainly, no true inquirer will deery the knowledge that comes to us through the senses, the avenues or channels through which we become acquainted with things around. Least of all is such an one as Aristotle disposed to undervalue it. "As regards the question of Truth," he says, "and the doctrine that not all that appears (the phenomena around us) is true, we must observe that perception by the senses is not false when it is kept in its own sphere, but, imagination is not perception." And what he means by mistaking "imagination" for perception becomes clear from another passage in which he points out the limitation of perception. "There is another objection," he says, "which we must raise (against those who held materialistic views), this, namely, that the portion of the universe which is perceptible to the senses is but a small part, and yet they draw conclusions from this small part to the whole!" To Aristotle, as to Plato, there was a something invisible, impalpable, beyond the ken of the senses, eternal in the heavens, beyond the fleeting river that engulfs the things of matter and mortality. Aristotle is no nature-worshipper.

5. Finally, let us note again that Aristotle is no intellect-worshipper. True, he says in one place (*Met.* xii. ix. 1074 b 15) that "mind (*nous*), the thinking power, is the most Divine of all phenomena;" but in another (1074 b 29) he straightway adds, "It is clear that there is something more worthy of honour than the thinking power, viz. that which occupies the thinking power, its thoughts" (*to noumenon*), a distinction with a difference. Not the mind occupying itself with no matter what, is, in Aristotle's opinion, worthy of admiration, even were it (and it is in this connection that, with all reverence, he is speaking) the Mind of God Himself, but it is the Mind occupied with grand and noble thoughts alone that is or can be, from the very nature of the case, Divine.

*Summary.*—"If a man has no definite opinions, if belief and unbelief are alike to him, how does he differ from the plants?"

They are the teachers (opening up the path of progress) who explain the causes.

"We cannot always demand the cause." The "reason why" must some-

<sup>1</sup> *Epagōgē*, evolution of a general law out of many particulars.

<sup>2</sup> *Aisthēsei*, *aisthēsis*, is not to be restricted to the perception of the senses; rather it is opposed to them as intuition is to inference.

<sup>3</sup> *Ethismos* is a sort of unconscious induction, a process by which general truths may be said to grow up in the mind (Sir A. Grant, *in loc.*).



times be taken for granted. The nature of the proof must be in harmony with the nature of the thing to be proved.

“There is something higher than nature.”

“There is something higher than mind.”

These few “characteristics” which have presented themselves almost unbidden from the stores at our command, may suffice to reveal the man with whom we have to do, resolute and thorough in his search after truth, cautious, conscious of his own limitations; yea, humble and reverent, in his approach to it.

**IV. Aristotle's Definitions.**—The philosophical terms to which we would now briefly invite the reader's attention are five in number:—

1. *Action = the Cause.*—The word “Cause” takes, as we have seen, a very prominent place in Aristotle's terminology, and we may now go on to notice that he employs it in a sense much wider than the modern use. We mean by the “cause” of a thing simply that which produces it, the working-power.

Aristotle, however, distinguishes no less than four causes, two inner = in the thing itself, and two outer = independent of it.

*The Two Inner Causes are:—*

(1) That out of which a thing is made = Matter. In this sense metal is the “cause” of the statue; the silver the “cause” of the bowl.

(2) The shaping Idea = Form, that which was to be, the conception latent in the thing itself, its very nature or essence.

*The Two Outer Causes:—*

(3) That which effects the change, the working or moving power. In this sense the counsellor is the “cause” of what is done in the state, the builder is the “cause” of the house.

(4) That for which the thing is done, the object or end, the *telos*. In this sense the attainment of health is the “cause” of exercise, “Why do we take a walk?—In order to be healthy,” we reply, and when we make this reply, says Aristotle, we believe that we are assigning the “cause” of our action.

The four causes may thus be said to correspond to the four questions:—

1. Out of what?<sup>1</sup> = Matter.

2. Into what?<sup>2</sup> = The whole, the synthesis, shaped by determining Form.

3. By what agency?<sup>3</sup> = The moving power.

4. For what purpose?<sup>4</sup> = The *telos* = the object.

And note that the first three are all subordinate to the fourth, the *telos*. The matter, the form, the worker, the wood, the house, the builder, are all subservient to the end on account of which they come into existence; and that end in Aristotle's view is the good. We remember his definition of wisdom, “That which enables a man to discern the best for which things are done, the good (*to agathon*) in everything and the best (*to ariston*) in nature as a whole. Wisdom has to do with causes, for the good = the object belongs to the causes.” “Finally,” he says in his definition of causes, “there is something which is the end or goal, the *telos*, of the others. For that for which all exists (by reason of which, on account of which) is the best, and wills to be the goal of the others. It matters not,” he adds, “whether we call this the good-in-itself or the good in concrete (the good manifested in the things of sense).”

The good is to Aristotle the *Causa finalis*, the final cause, the end and goal of all that exists, God Himself, who wills to be the goal of the universe.

<sup>1</sup> *To ex hou aitia.*

<sup>3</sup> *Hothēn hē archē tēs metabolēs.*

<sup>2</sup> *To ti ēn einai.*

<sup>4</sup> *To hou heneka.*

2. *Nature* = *physis*.—What does Aristotle understand by “nature”? The summing up of his definition is as follows:—

“From what has been said, it follows that the first and strictly correct significance of nature is, that which has the principle of movement in itself.”

“Matter,” he adds, “is called ‘nature’ because it can receive such a principle into itself and the processes of birth and growth, because by virtue of this they are principles of movement. And this principle of movement which is in the things of nature is latent (immanent) in them, either potentially (*dynamei*) or actually (*entelecheia*).”

What Aristotle means by nature being that which is capable of “receiving the moving principle” will become apparent as we proceed.

3. *Energeia* and (4) *Dynamis*.—Here we have a pair of terms all-important to the right understanding of Aristotle.

*Energeia* is not with him, what we understand by “energy,” latent force; it is much more. We cannot translate *energeia* by “energy” unless we mean energy-in-action, energy displaying itself in power and reality, energy actually working. Hence, reality, actuality (*aktualität*), the word preferred both by English and German commentators on the philosopher. It is necessary to keep this distinction in view.

*Dynamis*, on the other hand, is latent force, which may or may not pass into *energeia*; it may lie passive, or it may show itself in action as *energeia*. Thus it answers to our term “potentiality” = capacity to be or become.

Of these two terms, it will be readily seen that *energeia* is by far the higher in Aristotle’s view. *Dynamis* may exist, the power to become may be there, but it cannot show itself or pass into life without the quickening of an *energeia* outside of itself.

5. *Kinēsis* = movement is a term closely connected with the preceding. With Aristotle it means more than with us. “If we try to explain one word by another, we should say that movement to Aristotle is ‘change’ (*metabolē*); or if we wish for a formal definition, we should say that ‘movement’ is the transition from mere possibility to reality.” It is very important for us, in connection with our present subject, to recollect that Aristotle held “movement” to be due to an impulse from without. “All that is moved,” he says in the *Physics*, “must of necessity be moved by something,” even when the movement seems to proceed from itself.

6. *Telos* we have already commented on. It is the end or goal for which a thing is done, as health is the *telos* of exercise.<sup>1</sup>

7. *Ousia* = substance or essence, is that which constitutes the essential nature of a thing; the *hypokeimenon*, that which underlies the qualities or “accidents” of the thing.

V. **The Ladder of Inquiry.**—From the foregoing we shall already have perceived what the object of the *Metaphysics* is—nothing less than an endeavour to find out the cause of all causes. The knowledge of this first cause is the first philosophy, the highest of all the sciences.

Aristotle prefaces his own explanation with a critique of the various doctrines set forth by his predecessors, an historical review which forms our most trustworthy account of the early philosophy. He shows that the first question which roused the interest of thinkers was this: What was the proto-element or original element?—a question which we can only understand as they who asked it understood it, if we bear in mind that by the proto-element they meant, not the proto-plasm, the first “stuck-together” of modern

<sup>1</sup> See a very clear explanation of this statement in Rolfe’s *Auffassung von Verhältnisse Gottes zur Welt und zum Menschen*, p. 19 et seq.



philosophers, but that which stuck-the-rest-together, an active combining synthetising element. What in all the world could this have been to produce the extraordinarily varied phenomena of nature? This was the first question of questions in philosophy.

Beginning with the water theory of Thales, Aristotle traces the development of the answer to the question, and points out that no two philosophers agreed in their solution of the puzzle. Each of the “elements” (earth alone excepted) had its man, its advocate urging its claims to be considered this *ur*-element—that out of which all else had developed itself. Earth was rejected in the inquiry, partly because she had already done duty in the myths and the popular fancy as the “great mother,” but partly, also, because, as Aristotle says, earth particles are too gross for the purpose in view. The proto-element must have been that which consists of the smallest and finest particles, because from it by composition (synthesis) everything else had proceeded. Thales maintained, as we know, that the origin of all things was water; Anaximenes upheld air; Anaximander, something which is thicker than air, but thinner than water; and Heracleitus propounded that doctrine which seemed the most probable of all, viz. that the combining moulding substance was fire. Finally, thinkers were confronted with the unanswerable argument that that which is “compounded” is later in time than the things out of which it is compounded, and that consequently earth, air, and water must all have been proto-elements as well as fire—a thought which probably led to Empedocles’ theory of the four elements, as well as to that of Anaxagoras, who started from an infinite number of first particles or principles.

The earliest philosophers, then, as Aristotle emphasises again and again, sought for a material cause; their *ur*-element must have been in the form of matter (*en hylēs eidei*) evolving all things out of itself, its outer form changing while itself remained as the eternal substratum.

According to all those mentioned, says Aristotle, “there could only be such a first cause as could be imagined in the form of matter, but,” he adds, “the question itself opened up the way for them, and forced them to seek farther. For, whether it be maintained that birth and decay proceed from one thing or from many, we are still obliged to ask: Why does this take place, and what is the cause of it? It is clear that matter does not produce the changes in itself. I mean,” he adds, “for example, that neither the wood nor the metal is the cause of any change that takes place in wood or metal—the wood does not make a bed, nor the metal a statue. Something else is the cause of the change, and the seeking of this cause is nothing else than the seeking of another principle—that which we call the principle of movement.”<sup>1</sup>

Just, then, as we marked the various steps of the ladder of knowledge, so now Aristotle calls upon us to note the various stages in the ladder of inquiry.

*Question First.*—What was the proto-element? was it in one form or in many?

*Question Second.*—What was the principle of movement? that which worked upon the proto-element or elements, and produced the changes in nature.

The earliest inquirers were not much troubled by this second question.

Flowing water, burning fire, seemed to them to have in itself that which could explain motion and change. The Eleatics, the Italian philosophers who succeeded the Ionian physiologists, also interpreted the phenomena of nature in their own ways. True being, they said, is without movement; all that

<sup>1</sup> By “movement” Aristotle, as we know, means also change.

changes belongs to the world of appearance only—an explanation which explained nothing.

The Pythagoreans made a step in advance of the physiologists, inasmuch as they abandoned matter; but their theories of number were, as Aristotle justly points out, superficial and arbitrary, while the very conception of “number” does not really get beyond matter. The Pythagorean system then was a sort of half-way house between matter and spirit—and in this category as we know, Aristotle places the study of mathematics. It is a help to the highest knowledge, but not itself the highest. The Pythagoreans could not explain their own theories—“how numbers are ‘one,’ or soul and body, or, generally, the form and the thing done.” The moving principle was not discovered by them.

Then came the Atomists, Leucippus and Democritus, the precursors of the theorists of the present day; but they too, says Aristotle, left the question unsolved like the others.

Motion, according to them, was the result of some inner necessity in nature, what we should call a hidden natural law.

As Aristotle observes, “None of these theories sufficed to explain the origin of things,” and he again makes the pregnant remark, that truth itself forced inquirers to seek the next principle. The goodness and the beauty of things, he says, could not possibly have their cause in fire or water, or any such thing, and he does not believe that the early thinkers themselves entertained such a notion, or that they ascribed a matter of such importance (as the constitution of the universe) “to automatism (automatic force = necessity) or chance.”

After the early Physiologists had said their say, the problem still remained, What—who—induced the rush of the combining water? What or who kindled the moulding fire? If we answer with the Atomists, “An inner necessity of nature,” the further problem remains, “Why this ‘necessity’? Who planted it in nature, and directed it? Who designed the operations of ‘necessity’ = natural law? Democritus himself, with his clear good sense, recognised the wonderful evidence of design in the structure of the human frame. Democritus himself, although he clung to the doctrine of necessity, would by no means allow the rule of chance. Thus Aristotle leads us on to see that the first two steps in the ladder of inquiry—

Which was the first element?

What was the moving force?

necessitate a third question—

3. Who, or what, directed the moving force?

And the answer to this, the question of questions, was, he says, discovered first of all by Anaxagoras. The power that all the others had been in search of was akin to the power that in-dwelt in each of themselves: *nous*—mind the supreme intelligence. Only by such a first cause working on and in matter can movement and change be explained. “Mind working in nature, as it does in living creatures,” says Aristotle, “he declared to be the cause of the whole world-order, a statement which in contradistinction to the haphazard conjectures of the first philosophers, opened the way for sober thought.” To Anaxagoras belongs the merit of having been the first to discriminate between matter and spirit. Here we have the foundation for “sober thought,” but the statement itself again forces us on, and thinkers were obliged to ask—

4. *Of what Nature is the Supreme Mind?* Is this intelligence benevolent and good, or malevolent and evil? We know already Aristotle’s idea on the subject, and in speaking of the doctrine of Anaxagoras, he immediately proceeds to state that Anaxagoras’ discovery had a double consequence—by it the



cause of the good was acknowledged to be the principle of things, as well as that principle of motion of which they had been in search.

The doctrine of the good as the ruling principle, however, was not universally accepted, as we remember, and Aristotle points this out. Men had observed, he says, that there exist in the universe not only order and beauty, but disorder and the reverse of the beautiful, and that the evil was more abundant than the good, the hateful than the beautiful; and out of the perception of this fact (or supposed fact) had grown that doctrine of Empedocles, which set up two rival contending principles—love and strife (*philia* and *neikos*) as the causes, respectively, of good and evil. This doctrine Aristotle will by no means accept. Still less does he admit the premises on which it is built. “In all things the good is the predominant principle,” and he gives the best and most scientific of reasons for the statement. The notion that strife is immortal, he says, is senseless. For strife itself is of the nature of evil. If evil, as supposed, were the prevailing principle, how could things be held together—how could anything be lasting and permanent—still less immortal? Strife—evil are dividing, disintegrating powers. How can they produce anything lasting, still less hold things together? And in a very beautiful passage which we shall meet with shortly (*Met.* XIV. iv. 1091 *b* 18), Aristotle arrives at the deep and most pregnant conclusion—“by nothing else is anything immortal than by reason of its possessing the good.” The good is the combining, moulding, holding-together force which alone, from the very nature of the case, can be immortal.

All this the first philosophers had seen but dimly. Anaxagoras himself, as we know from Plato, made a very poor use of his discovery. He dragged in spirit as the cause of things only when mechanical causes failed. We remember the graphic account which (in the *Phædo*<sup>1</sup>) Plato puts into the mouth of Socrates, of the disappointment which the half thought-out theories of Anaxagoras had brought to earnest men. Anaxagoras assigned “causes” for the existence of things, he says, much as they would do who should give as the cause of Socrates sitting quietly in the prison at Athens, the physical fact that the bones and sinews of Socrates were capable of contracting and permitting of his sitting down. Was this the cause of the presence of Socrates in the prison-house?

“By heaven!” says the old philosopher, “if it depended on my bones and sinews, they would long ago have decamped and been found miles away from Athens.”

The causes of Socrates’ sitting quietly in the prison-house were spiritual causes, the sentence of the Athenians on the one hand, his own noble and resolute mind, which prompted death rather than flight, on the other.

So, to all thinking men, intelligence—directing, resolute mind, planning, organising, making decisions and taking its stand upon them—alone can explain the real cause of things, is itself the first originating cause.

That the early philosophers did not perceive this, that Anaxagoras himself failed to see the full drift of his reasoning, was to be expected. The progress of truth is always gradual. The earliest philosophy, as Aristotle says, “stammered”—spoke like a lisping child—as was natural. Those who came later in the day, like Anaxagoras, he compares to untrained soldiers, who often contrive to deal good blows, but have no system. The early philosophers did not really know what they were maintaining, they had not fully reasoned out their statements.

**Summary of the Argument—Question First.** Which was the protoelement?

<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, p. 558.

*Answer.* Water, air, fire, atoms—one element or all.

*Objection.* These things are material. How can matter develop itself? “The metal makes no statue, the wood no bed.” There must have been a *working power*.

*Question Second.* What was this working power, this principle of motion?

*Answer.* Water-combining—fire-moulding, some mechanical force, some inner necessity or law of nature.

*Objection.* What—who—began the movement of the elements? Who constructed the mechanism? Who implanted the necessity? Who gave the law? There must have been a power to impart the first impetus, a power to guide.

*Question Third.* What was this impetus-giving directing force?

*Answer.* Intelligence—*nous*—supreme mind.

*Objection.* Evil is abundant in the world.

*Question Fourth.* What is the nature of the supreme mind?

*Answer.* The nature of the good. That which began and sustains the movement of the Kosmos must be eternal. Evil is not eternal. It is a dividing, disintegrating, destroying influence. If evil had been the ruling power, the universe must long since have crumbled to pieces and ceased to be. Only by possession of the good is anything immortal.

Thus, the various steps of the ladder of inquiry land us on the same heights as did the steps of the ladder of knowledge. By both we have climbed up to God—highest knowledge, highest good, the only possible originating, directing, sustaining first cause.



## ARISTOTLE'S PSYCHOLOGY

- I. INTRODUCTION. II. THE EARLY THEORIES CONCERNING THE SOUL. III. ARISTOTLE'S GENERAL DEFINITION OF THE SOUL. IV. THE LADDER OF LIFE.

### I. INTRODUCTION

WHEN we turn to the subject of the soul, its powers and capacities, we come to one which Aristotle regarded as second only to the "First Philosophy," the knowledge of God. To it he devoted the three books of the treatise *Concerning the Soul*—a treatise which, with all its brevity, is among the most precious that have come down to us under his name. Of its genuineness there is no doubt; and, like all the true works of Aristotle, it opens with a pithy introduction, which gives the keynote to the whole. We recollect the first sentence of the *Metaphysics*: "All men by nature desire knowledge"; and by the side of this we may place the introduction to the work *On the Soul*. "Knowledge," says Aristotle, "we take to be something noble and honourable; but," he continues, "we make distinctions—one kind of knowledge we esteem more than another, either because of the degree of painstaking and exactitude (*akribeia*) required to attain it, or because the subject with which it deals stands higher or is more worthy of our admiration. On both grounds, we place our inquiry into the nature of the soul in the first line. And we shall not err if we say that this knowledge is of great importance for truth in general, and especially for the investigation of nature; for the soul, we may say, is the principle of living creatures. "Let us then endeavour," he adds, "to contemplate (bring our own highest thoughts to bear upon) and to know both the nature and the essence of the soul."

Thus the task which Aristotle here sets himself is, once more, the inquiry into causes. He is not content with learning the nature of the soul, *i.e.* the natural conditions under which it exists, but will even try to realise its true essence—to penetrate, as it were, into the inner secrets of its being. A profound task! and no less perplexing than profound—just in proportion to the supreme importance of the subject is its difficulty. Aristotle himself declares that to "attain to any reliable knowledge about the soul is altogether and in every way one of the most difficult of tasks."

**Difficulty of the Subject.**—This difficulty arises in greatest measure from the complexity of the subject. In Aristotle's view, it is impossible to study the nature of the soul by itself alone. The soul, he says, cannot be considered apart from the body; for without the latter, it would seem that, as a rule, the soul neither exercises its functions nor even suffers passively. For instance, in such feelings as anger, boldness, desire, and in perception by the aid of the senses, the body takes part as well as the soul. Hence the physiologist must be consulted in the inquiry no less than the philosopher, although the explanation which each would give of the cause of the feelings mentioned would vary with his particular standpoint.

Thus, in regard to the feeling of "anger," the philosopher would tell us that it is called forth by the desire to retaliate; whereas the physiologist's explanation would be that it is produced by a seething of the heart-blood or heart of the body. Both are right, in their own respective spheres, says Aristotle—the philosopher looks to the spiritual cause, the form or idea; the physiologist to the corporeal cause, the matter on which the idea works.

Even in thinking, that function which beyond all else is the peculiar function of the soul, we cannot altogether separate soul and body; for thought, in some of its aspects, is indebted to imagination; and imagination, in its turn, is indebted to the senses. Wherefore, body and soul are so interwoven one with the other—they act and re-act to so great an extent the one upon the other—that, in Aristotle's view, no inquiry into the nature of the soul can be profitably undertaken apart from the consideration of the vital union between itself and its shrine, the body.

We see at once from this preliminary statement how widely Aristotle's psychology differs from that of Plato.

In Plato's view the body is indeed to be exercised and developed, but this is in order to prevent its becoming a drag upon the soul, or to hinder its getting the dominion over the soul. In the end, it is only the mortal coil from which the true lover of wisdom is glad to escape as soon as he can do so without offending his masters, the gods.<sup>1</sup>

Aristotle, on the other hand, always speaks considerably and respectfully, as it were, of the body. He treats it throughout as a workman treats some valued instrument or tool which has stood him for years in good stead, and which he prizes on that account. Aristotle's psychology is, therefore, the first really scientific attempt to understand man as he is—a *synolon*—body and soul both together forming a whole.

In fairness, however, the two systems ought not to be compared, for except in the *Timæus*, Plato scarcely touches those physiological questions, which possess very much attraction for Aristotle.

Plato's psychology is infinitely precious to us, having regard solely to the spiritual side of the complex "man"; Aristotle's is no less interesting as dealing with both sides of the problem. If we miss in him the dramatic force which lends so vivid a charm to Plato's style—if we find in him no striking allegory such as that of the "charioteer and his steeds" or the "threefold image" of the soul—we experience nevertheless in the study of Aristotle the keen interest which the working out of a solid well-built argument never fails to bring.

Let us note that here, as elsewhere, before proceeding to rear his structure, Aristotle clears away the ruins of older theories, and thus prepares the ground for his own.

## II.—THE EARLY THEORIES CONCERNING THE NATURE OF THE SOUL

Greek thought had early fixed upon two signs by which the presence of the soul in anything might be known. These were:—

- (1) The power of movement.
- (2) The power of feeling or perception by the senses.

By these two tests it was held that the en-souled might be distinguished from the non-souled, the animate from the inanimate.

<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, p. 575.



Of these two, movement first naturally attracted by itself most or all of the attention of thinkers; and Thales, the father of philosophy, went so far as to attribute, in the personifying fashion of the age, a soul to the magnet because of its power in moving the iron.

Then arose the question: What is the nature of the soul, of this mysterious tenant of the body, whose departure from it produces the awful change known as death?

To this question of questions there were three leading classes of replies, all of which concurred in one point, viz. that the soul participates in the nature of the body, *i.e.* that it was material.

1. **The Elemental Theory.**—There were those who maintained that the soul was composed either of one “element” or of several; and, as in the case of the problem concerning the great moving power of the universe (see *ante*, p. 551), so here also, as regards the little moving power of the individual, every “element” except earth had its advocate.

(a) *Water.*—Hippo, a physiologist of the Periclean age, who held fast to the earliest doctrine of all concerning the proto, or first, element—that propounded by Thales (p. 647)—declared that the soul must also be composed of water. The reason for this (to us) extraordinary conjecture was doubtless the part played by moisture in the development of life.

(b) *Air.*—Diogenes (of Apollonia) maintained that the soul must be formed of air, the very finest (and most spiritual) of the elements.

(c) *Fire.*—Heracleitus held (as we know) that the soul consisted of fiery or warm dry vapours (see *ante*, p. 647).

(d) *Blood.*—Finally, Critias<sup>1</sup> was of opinion that the soul is to be found in the blood, inasmuch as feeling is intimately connected with the soul, and feeling is based on the nature of the blood.

Each of these theories had its adherents, because each and all were based on a very plausible notion, which, as we shall presently see, Aristotle demolishes at a stroke.

2. **The Mechanical Theory.**—Then there was the scientific, and, to many minds, most attractive explanation of the atomists, Leucippus and Democritus and their school, aptly termed the “mechanical theory” of movement, and to it our philosopher devotes a good deal of attention. Democritus, then, maintained that the soul is fire and heat—fire, because this is the most immaterial of the elements, consists of the finest particles, and is itself moved as well as the mover of other things. According to him, there is an infinite number of indivisible atoms (see *ante*, p. 648), and of these he calls those which are globe-shaped fire and soul. This fire-soul is identical with the spirit (*nous* = mind), and it consists of the original indivisible atoms, whose capacity for movement proceeds from their fineness and their form, for their spherical shape it is that enables them to penetrate through everything. To these belong the so-called “sun-dust” particles, which come through the windows and are visible in the sun’s rays. These fiery, globe-shaped soul-particles are drawn in with the breath, and so long as respiration continues, they maintain life by keeping up the fire-soul within. Whenever, on the other hand, breathing is impeded, the presence of the cold outer air gets the upper hand, the fire-soul is not replenished—it goes out, and death ensues. Hence, on this theory, as Aristotle remarks, respiration is the limit or standard of life, a truth which, in its own way, no one can deny.

The theory, however, as an explanation of the phenomena exhibited in a

<sup>1</sup> Probably the leader of the thirty tyrants, and, if so, the disciple of Socrates, and a man of culture.

living creature, is exceedingly weak, and Aristotle finds no difficulty in disposing of it. "Democritus says," he observes, "that the globe-shaped atoms are in motion because from their nature they cannot stand still, and thus they draw the whole body with them and bring it into motion." And to this theory a certain sect whom he calls "Pythagoreans,"<sup>1</sup> added the shrewd observation, that the particles which dance in the sunlight are in perpetual motion, even on the calmest day. Well, says Aristotle, granted that these atoms by their natural incessant motion produce motion in another. We must ask, Is standing still to be explained in the same way? How can you account on this reasoning for rest, pause, cessation from motion?

"No!" he says emphatically. "Not in this way does the soul move the living creature. Much rather does she move it by some definite choice and conscious thought!"

**3. The Harmony or Combination Theory.**—Finally, there is that subtle theory about the soul which we have already met with and seen refuted by Plato (*ante*, p. 602), namely, that the soul is a "harmony." That Aristotle also deems it necessary to draw this theory within the scope of his inquiry is a proof of the fascination it possessed for the Greek mind.

There were no less than three ways in which the supporters of this doctrine tried to demonstrate its truth in his day.

(a) Harmony, they said, is the union-blending and synthesis of opposites, and so is the soul.

No, Aristotle replies, the reasoning is not applicable, because it would reduce the soul to a new series of relationships between certain conditions or attributes. What becomes of the real underlying thing that supports these conditions and attributes? What becomes also of movement? It is not possible to explain the nature of the soul in this way. You may say of health or of any excellence of the body that it is a harmony, but you cannot thus define the underlying thing, the soul itself.

(b) Harmony, they say again, lies in proportion or the just adaptation of parts, and in this way the soul is a harmony of parts.

No, replies Aristotle again, your use of the term is inadmissible in regard to the soul. Proportion has reference to the sizes and relationships of the various parts out of which a whole is composed. You may, indeed, easily measure the parts of the body. They are put together in a manifold number of ways; but of what is the spirit (the invisible *nous*, the thinking mind) composed; or in what way can we understand even the lower parts of the soul, the perceiving and appetitive organs?

(3) *Harmony*, they say finally, is the mingling (of material elements) in due proportion.

This definition, says Aristotle, is just as foolish as the others, the mingling of elements in proportion! but of what elements, of those that form the bones, or of those that form the flesh? It is quite plain that the proportion in which the "elements" are mixed cannot be the same in both cases. If this assertion be true, and the soul consist of a harmony of material elements, then, as a necessary consequence, we must have many souls, and these spread over the whole body. Wherefore, Aristotle concludes, it is not possible for the soul itself to be a "harmony" in any of these senses whatsoever.

Underlying these various theories—the "elemental," the "mechanical," and the "harmony" theories—is the assumption that the soul is material, composed of the same elements as the body. The basis of this assumption is a

<sup>1</sup> It is by no means certain what school Aristotle is alluding to under this name. He seems to know but little about Pythagoras or his followers.



doctrine which at all times found great favour with the Greeks, one which, in its own sphere, is perfectly true, viz. that "like is only discerned by like." The soul perceives all, hence, it must consist of the same elements. If "like is discerned by like," the soul must contain everything within herself in order to be able to discern them in others. This notion Aristotle refutes with his usual masterly skill. This, he says, would only enable her to discern the elements in things—what is it that enables her to discern a whole?—not only the elements out of which a thing is made, but the particular and special whole into which they are formed. Shall we say that a whole "stone" or a whole "man" is present in the soul, as well as the elements of which they are composed? How is it that the soul can discern God, or man, or flesh, or bones? And how does she perceive the good and the not good? Are these made out of material elements? And if not, how? On the theory that "like is discerned by like," as interpreted by those people, if the soul is material as they maintain, how can she discern these things? God—the good—these are not material, and yet the soul discerns them.

So at every point Aristotle demolishes the theories of the earlier philosophers. They were not worthy to be held by a thinking mind. "All," he says, "with one exception, declare the soul to be composed of all the elements or a combination of all. ANAXAGORAS alone maintained that the spirit=*nous*, the thinking power, has nothing in common with anything else. "Spirit alone of all that exists," he said, "is simple, unmixed, and pure. He refers both knowledge and movement to it," comments Aristotle, "when he says that the spirit has set the whole in movement. Anaxagoras it was who paved the way for the great thinkers of the world by placing spirit on his rightful throne in the microcosmos of man as in the macrocosmos of the universe; but Anaxagoras, as we know, both from Plato (see p. 561) and from Aristotle, left much unexplained, and did not even endeavour to work out logically the great idea which had come to him.

### III.—ARISTOTLE'S DEFINITION OF THE SOUL

We can easily understand that the upholders of these old theories when they saw them knocked down, one after the other, by the ruthless logic of Aristotle, would insist on having their revenge. "If," they would say, "the soul is not composed of one or more of the 'elements,' nor of fiery, life-giving atoms—if it is not the union of opposite qualities, nor a something justly and beautifully put together in the same way as the body—if it is not, so to speak, a 'chemical mixture' in which all the ingredients are so combined that nothing is either wanting or in excess—if amongst the idealists, your own friends, you are still not satisfied, if the *nous* of Anaxagoras is not explained sufficiently, if the magnificent thoughts of Plato do not content you—what, in Heaven's name, do you conceive the soul to be? We demand an answer."

And the answer Aristotle was not slow to give. He puts it forth in the shape of a "definition" which must always hold its own as one of the most fertile of human thoughts. It is to be found in the second book of the *De Anima* :—

"The soul is the first *entelecheia* of a body, which has the capacity for life."

A little further on, he repeats the same thought in different words: "If," he says, "we would put forth a definition applicable to every soul, it would be this, viz. the soul is the first *entelecheia* of a natural organised body."

The reader will probably be puzzled rather than enlightened at the first

glance by the definition, and more than disposed to say, "What may Aristotle mean? I can understand the definitions of the older philosophers—I know what Critias implied when he said that 'the soul was the blood, for the blood is the life'—but this definition—the *entelechy* of an organised body? The shell of your fertile kernel is altogether too hard." Nevertheless it is worth the cracking. Aristotle, like a Greater, bids us "seek" that we may find. Let us place by the side of the definition, an etymology, with which we are already familiar, and see if it does not help us.

The soul is the first *entelecheia* of a body which has the exponents (*dynamis*) for life.

*Entelecheia*, is that which contains the end—*telos*. It is therefore the being in a state of completeness or perfection.

In other words, the soul is that which energises—works out the end or object for which the body exists.

If we could imagine a living "something" taking possession of a block of marble (or any other kind of matter), entering into it, and proceeding to evolve by slow degrees from the block a shapely statue—moulding it from within outwards, and endowing it for a time with its own life, that living something would be the first *entelechy* of the statue.

If, again, we could imagine the statue thus shaped and endowed as itself energising, putting forth all its powers in reality, in active work—then we should have a rude conception of its second or final *entelechy*. For in doing its work, it would be accomplishing its end, or *telos*.

This figure may serve to illustrate after a lame fashion Aristotle's doctrine of the soul. After a very lame fashion, indeed!—for what figure could do justice to the real power of the mysterious something which we call LIFE, to the phenomena of growth and increase witnessed in every "natural" organised body that has the capacity to receive and develop "Life"?

Let us now rehearse and tabulate Aristotle's definitions, using his own peculiar terminology, with which it is absolutely necessary to make ourselves at home:—

(1) The soul is the true essence (*ousia*), the substratum or thing that underlies (*hypokeimenon*); it is the form or indwelling idea (*eidos*); the energising, vitalising, working power (*energeia*).

(2) The body is the matter (*hyle*) on which and in which the soul works—that which has the capacity (*dynamis*) to receive and be formed by it.

(3) Body and soul, as form and matter, correspond to one another, and the one works, the other is worked upon; and the union of the two produces a whole (the *synolon*—all together), the individual.

(4) The soul acting in, on, and by means of the body is *entelechy*—its realisation; for it, the soul, is itself the end (*telos*) for which the body exists.

This *entelechy* is twofold:—

(a) It exists first in the same way that knowledge (*epistēmē*) unused, exists—that is, in, as it were, a slumbering state.

(b) It develops later as knowledge used—highest thought (*theorein*), mind and spirit awake, and put forth all their energies.

In Aristotle's precise words: "In the existence of the soul, there are both sleeping and waking—waking corresponds to our highest thought (*theorein*); sleeping to the possession of knowledge not put forth.

Well might Aristotle say of the early philosophers that they "hoped" and stammered! By the side of a conception such as this, the old theories are absolutely childish.



These considerations naturally present themselves immediately in regard to it:—

1. *The Two Conceptions of the Idea.*—Aristotle's doctrine of the soul is an extension or adaptation of Plato's doctrine of the ideas. Plato held, as we know, that the ideas—the ideal forms or prototypes after which all earthly things were fashioned, exist in heaven. In the *Ethics* and elsewhere Aristotle rejects this conception; it was not sufficiently "practical" or workable for him. Notwithstanding, he is himself no less an idealist than Plato—with this difference, in that instead of the idea being for him a sublime object of contemplation existing apart beyond the earthly sphere he conceives of it as a living moulding force existing within the individual. We hold both philosophers to be in the right. The IDEA is in heaven—the IDEA is also within us.

2. *The Nature of the Connection between Soul and Body.*—The definition also helps us to understand Aristotle's doctrine of the intimate union between soul and body. This union is not to be explained on the old materialistic ground that soul and body are alike formed of the same material elements. Not so! as we have seen, Aristotle proved that spirit is something entirely different and distinct from matter, it is not from its "likeness" to matter that its power of discerning matter proceeds. The connection between soul and body is of a totally different character, it is that of worker and thing worked upon in the first place, of worker and his instrument (*organon*) in the second. "We need as little inquire," says Aristotle, "whether soul and body are one, as we need ask whether wax and the form of the wax are one."

3. The definition, again, closely followed, opens up a very wide vista. Aristotle says, not only that the soul is the *entelecheia* of the body, but he adds that if the definition is to be an all-embracing one, it must run thus, viz. "The soul is the first *entelecheia* of every natural organised body," capable of receiving life. It therefore includes the whole realm of animated nature, of what we now understand by Physiology (*physis*=nature) as well as what we call Psych-o-logy (*psyche*=the soul).

4. We are thus led on necessarily to a closer examination into the manifestations of the mysterious power which we speak of as "life." "Life," says Aristotle, "is understood in different ways, and when even one of the different modes of life is present, we say that the thing "lives," as *e.g.* when mind is there, or feeling, or movement, and standing still, or that kind of movement which relates to nourishment,<sup>1</sup> showing itself both in increase and decrease. Thus, all plants "live," for they have the power of taking in nourishment, and increasing or diminishing.

If plants then possess "life" they also, to use the Aristotelian terminology, possess a soul, as do the unreasoning living creatures which show their "life" by their "movements" from place to place, the animals. From this it follows necessarily that as there are different degrees of "life," so there must be also different kinds of "soul."

One feature, however, is common to all souls, this, namely, that they can only work in and on that particular kind of body, that "organism," for which they are specially suited. This is implied in the very word *entelecheia*=the working out of an end, the realisation of an object. There is no such thing as a soul becoming the tenant of a body, at hap-hazard, accidentally, or by "chance."<sup>2</sup>

The soul, with all its wondrous vital force, can only energise such powers

<sup>1</sup> As we know, the term "Movement" (= *kinēsis*) includes in Aristotle's use of it what we understand by change.

<sup>2</sup> The bearing of this on the Pythagorean doctrine of the transmigration of souls is evident.

and capacities as are already in existence slumbering in the nature to which it comes. The soul, or life-force, properly belonging to the highest material organism, the human body, would be powerless to energise in the body of the most intelligent of animals, say, that of the dog. Why? Because it would be without its own appropriate tools (*organa*=instruments). It could not make use of the body of a brute.

"We might as well maintain," says Aristotle, speaking in that personifying strain which his countrymen understood so well, "that the building Art could clothe herself in a wind-instrument" (could make use of a flute as her tool instead of hammer or axe), "for," he adds, "just as Art makes use of her own proper tools, so the soul makes use of the body."

The consideration of the different kinds of "life" thus brings us finally to another of those wonderful ladders of reasoning, those classifications or ascending scales by means of which Aristotle delights to build up his arguments, and from the heights of which it is so easy for us to look back upon the whole upward path.

#### IV.—THE LADDER OF LIFE

To give a very full view of Aristotle's psychology in the space at our disposal is not practicable. All that we can hope to do here is to sketch it in outline, and bring out as clearly as possible the leading points of thought as we ascend.

1. **First Stage: the Vegetative or Nutritive Soul** (*psychē threptikē*).  
 (a) *The Basis of Life*.—This, the lowest form of life, exists in "every natural organised body," without exception and of necessity, for, deprived of it, no mortal thing could "live" in any sense at all. Without the nourishment of the body through the nutritive soul, or capacity, the "higher" soul could not exercise its powers. The chief function then of this lowest soul, the basis of life, is the taking in and assimilating of food. "This power of taking nourishment," says Aristotle, "can be separated from the other powers of the soul, but not they from it" (*i.e.* the nutritive soul can exist alone, not so the higher soul). "This becomes clear," he adds, "when we consider the plants, which possess no other power of the soul," and yet, in a true sense, they live. "Life then comes to every living creature through this principle, that of assimilating nourishment."

(b) *The Continuity of Life*.—But the lowest soul has another and most important power, that of reproduction.

"The most natural of the functions peculiar to living creatures, in so far as they are perfect . . . is," says Aristotle, "the producing of others like unto themselves, the animal bringing forth the animal, the plant, the plant." Observe, that while Aristotle calls the capacity for assimilating nourishment "the first and most common power of the soul," he describes reproduction as the "most natural work function of living creatures." In other words, the propagation of the species is the function which is most in accordance with that design in nature, the Divine purpose which to Aristotle's keen eye is so clear. He shall describe this purpose in his own words:—

"The most natural of functions to living creatures," he says, "is the producing of others like unto themselves—the animal bringing forth the animal, the plant the plant—to this end, that they, in so far as they are able, may share in the eternal and the Divine; for this is what all reach after (*lit.*, stretch towards = *oregontai*), and it is in accordance with this that everything in nature is done. . . . But as it is not possible for these creatures to



share in the eternal and Divine—since that which is perishable cannot abide continually as an individual—they take part in it according to their ability, some in a greater, others in a less degree.” They continue, not as individuals, but as a race. “In number they are not one,” he adds; “but in form they are one.” That is, the creatures belonging to the humbler grades of life abide continually as one in idea—not as individuals, but as a race or genus. The oak-tree decays—as an individual it cannot abide continually; but the genus oak lives on; its form, its idea is one through countless generations. And so in their degree the plant and the animal do “stretch towards the eternal and Divine,” for their humble “soul-life” is preserved in that of their species.

And let us note that this is involved in the object towards which, as Aristotle tells us, all nature strives. For the object, he says, is twofold. It is subjective as well as objective, and the one implies the other. In striving towards the objective end—the *telos*, the good *per se* “sharing in the eternal and Divine,” the subjective end, even the preservation of “life,” the perpetuation of the idea in the species, the lesser good, is attained.

(c) *The Conditions of Life*.—Lastly, Aristotle considers the “why and the wherefore” of the manifestations of life—the growth of living things: to what is it due? To him there is but one answer. It is due to the in-dwelling soul or idea. The soul is the determining “cause” (*aitia*) and principle (*archē*) of the living body. And it is the cause in three distinct ways:—

(a) As the cause of movement (and also of change and “metabolism,” see p. 657).

(b) As the object-cause, as explained above.

(c) As the essence or substance (*ousia*) of the ensouled body—that which makes it to become in reality what it is in possibility.

The soul as cause is quite sufficient to account for all the phenomena of the living thing. In this connection we have another of Aristotle’s beautiful conceptions. “It is manifest,” he says, “how the soul is the object-cause; for just as mind works [in man] on account of an object, so does nature, and the object is her aim and end (her *telos*). And just as nature works towards an object [in the great whole], so does the soul in living things; for all natural bodies are instruments of the soul, and this in plants as well as animals.” The soul, then, the in-dwelling idea, shapes her instrument to her own purposes, and the limits of its growth and increase are determined by her. Some of the early philosophers had attributed the phenomena of growth and nourishment to the action of fire, as being the only body or element in which nourishment and growth are manifest. As we recollect, the soul itself was held to consist of fiery particles. Aristotle shows the folly of this reasoning. It is impossible, he says, that, either in plants or animals, fire can be the working power. It may, indeed, be a helping cause (*synaition*),<sup>1</sup> but it cannot be the absolute cause . . . for the growth of fire goes on to infinity so long as there is any material to consume. But”—note!—“in all things framed by nature there is a limit, and a reasonable proportion (*logos*), both as regards size and growth.” And this (arrest at the proper terminus) is due, says Aris-

<sup>1</sup> The reference to the “helping cause” is one of the many wise and moderating touches which we find in the true man of science. “That by which the body is nourished,” he says, “is twofold—as in the case of a ship which is steered by the hand of the steersman as well as by the rudder. In like manner the food which is taken must be digested, and this takes place by means of the bodily heat; wherefore every ensouled body possesses heat.” Nourishment again prepares energy.

totle, "to the soul, and not to the fire—it is the work of the idea (the *logos*) rather than of matter" in any shape or form whatsoever.

*Summary: First Point.*—The lower functions and powers necessarily precede the higher (first the natural, then the spiritual). On this Aristotle insists strongly over and over again.

*Second Point.*—Everything in nature strives to share in the Divine and the eternal. This most beautiful conception helps us to understand what Aristotle means by the whole universe stretching towards God (see *ante*, p. 645)—God the Eternal, Himself unmoved, but the Mover, attracting all that lives, from lowest to highest, towards Himself. He, the Good, willed to be the Object-Cause of all things.

*Third Point.*—The twofold object. In striving towards the Divine objective cause, the creature secures its own subjective good.

*Fourth Point.*—The conditions of growth determined not by matter, but by the in-dwelling idea, which vivifies, moulds, promotes growth, and arrests it at the right stage. And this idea? How is it to be explained? Only by a reference to the Orderer of all, who is both in the order of the universe (the idea), and apart from it as the commander of an army is, both in the order of his forces, and yet apart from it

**Second Stage: the Sentient and Perceiving Soul** (*psychē æsthêtikē*)—*The Importance of the Senses.*—(a) The senses form the basis of a living thing's self-help.

Life, vitality, comes to every living thing, and is maintained, as we have seen, through the capacity for assimilating nourishment; but when we begin to speak of the *zōon*, the living creature *par excellence*—the animal—we attach to the idea of "Life" a higher power, that of feeling, *æsthesis*.<sup>1</sup>

The humblest creature above the level of the plants in the scale of being must necessarily possess feeling, or it would be destroyed. Plants do not possess feeling—why? Because they do not absolutely require it. Here again we have one of Aristotle's famous dicta:—

"Nature," he says, "makes nothing uselessly; for everything that is natural either exists on account of an object, or accompanies an object."

What object would the senses serve in plants? Obviously, none.

Those living things that remain on one spot and are rooted to it, says Aristotle, can do without the senses, for they draw their nourishment from whence they sprang—mother earth (*ibid.*, iii. 12, 434 b, 2).

But when we come to creatures a little higher on the ladder, the conditions of existence are different, and nature accommodates her endowments to the necessity of the case. "If," he says, "there were a body which could move from place to place without at the same time possessing the sense-feeling, it would be destroyed, and would not reach its object, which is the work of nature—for how could it nourish itself?"

The primary object of the senses then is the securing of nourishment, and the animal is so much higher than the plant in that it has to exert its powers in order to acquire that which the plant obtains unconsciously. Even a creature such as the polypus, which, like the plant, remains on one spot, we dignify by the name of "animal"—living thing, on account of its pos-

<sup>1</sup> It may astonish some readers to find the "æsthetic" soul ranking only second in the scale of being. The explanation, of course, is, that we must not read modern uses into old words. "Æsthetic," like many other terms, has changed its meaning in the course of the ages. Not only in the Aristotelian terminology, but in its ordinary etymological sense among the Greeks, *æsthesis* denoted simply feeling or perception.



sessing the feeling-apparatus and the energy necessary to procure its own food (*ibid.*, ii. 2, 413 b, 2).

The first step in the development of conscious, as distinct from unconscious life, is the attempt at self-help, and the necessity for this self-help in ministering to the lowest need of all, the need of bodily nourishment, continues in force in mortals, high as we may mount through the later stages of the ladder of life. "First the natural, then the spiritual."

(b) The senses form the basis of the creature's practical activity. Obviously, however, in these later stages the senses play another and a higher part. To quote Aristotle again (*ibid.*, iii. 12, 434 b, 3): It is not possible for the body of a living thing which does not remain fixed to one spot, to possess, on the one hand, a soul and a discerning mind (*nous kritikos*), and, on the other hand, to be without the senses. For what, he asks, in such a case, would either soul or body profit it? Nothing. It is the senses that form the basis of its practical activity. It is through the senses that even the highest soul—that which possesses *nous*, MIND, the soul of man—is put *en rapport*, not only with the world outside itself, with other bodies and souls, but, strange to say, with its own body, that of which it is the tenant. Such is the importance in Aristotle's eyes of those organs so despised by certain schools of philosophy—the senses.

What, then, are the senses? The senses, we say, are the channels through which the soul communicates with the outside world. But how is this effected? By means of the impressions received through the senses. "The organ of sense (*æstheterion*)," says Aristotle (iii. 2, 425 b, 23), "is that which is capable of receiving an impression of the thing perceived without the accompanying matter (*aneu tēs ulēs*)." Elsewhere he puts the same fact a little differently. Speaking of the senses in general, he says that they "receive the forms of the objects perceived without the accompanying matter as the wax receives the stamp of the signet-ring without receiving the iron or the gold of which the ring is made. It receives the gold or silver stamp, but not as gold or silver" (ii. 12, 424 a, 17). The form alone is stamped on the wax—the form alone is impressed on the individual sense. It is well to note this definition, for it leads us up to the next rung of the ladder, as we shall see presently.

In the sense-organ (*æstheterion*) is lodged the sense (*æsthesis* = power of perception), but this power is potential only. It is simply a *dynamis* = capacity, and before it can become an *energia* = reality, it requires not only a stimulus from without, the object to be perceived, but a medium through which the object may be perceived. Thus, before a sense can act at all, four factors must come into play. We must have:—

- (a) The sense-organ, *e.g.* the eye;
- (b) The sense itself, the capacity of vision;
- (c) Light, as the transparent medium, to reveal the object;
- (d) Finally, the object to be perceived, which is altogether outside and independent of the perceiving soul.

Take away any one of these four factors and the sense is useless. This also is a point to be noted, since it too contrasts with a higher stage of life. The life of the senses is a life lived of necessity in dependence on the outer world.

Note again one other point, which Aristotle brings out clearly, *viz.* the distinction between the sense and its organ. "It is the sense-organ (the *æstheterion*)," he says, "in which the capacity (= *dynamis*, power to see, hear, &c.) is lodged. In one way, therefore, the organ and the capacity are the same; but their nature is different, otherwise the sense would be material."

"For instance," comments Bender, *in loc.*, "light and the eye are indeed

one and not separable; but in conception they must be different, for the sense of sight is not material, but dynamic." So then, to quote Aristotle once more, "the sense is the conception, the *logos*, so to say, the reasonable, rational part, and the potentiality (dynamic conception) of its organ." In other words, seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, smelling, are the work of a certain life-power dwelling in matter, and acting through matter, but not itself material.

**The Senses in Particular.**—Aristotle devotes considerable space to a discussion of the five senses, and the media through which they act. Here we need not follow him in detail, but shall merely gather up points of special interest.

(a) *Which is the most Important of the Senses?*—Probably if the question were addressed to ourselves, ninety-nine out of a hundred would reply at once, the sense of sight, and for the reply we should seem to have not only "common" sense, but high authority on our side. Plato, as we recollect, was of opinion that sight and light are given to the mortal thinking creature for high ends, in order that, by beholding the harmony and order of the heavenly bodies, he may be induced to bring his own nature into conformity with that order and harmony. But we have not yet reached the thinking creatures. Other animals besides man possess the senses; man's nature has much in common with theirs, and the question before us is: What sense is most important to the sentient creature of every rank, from lowest to highest? Aristotle answers without hesitation: the sense of touch. First the natural, then the spiritual. The sense of touch, of feeling, is the basis on which the other and higher senses rest. If a creature which can move from place to place had no feeling, it could neither perceive what to flee from nor what to lay hold of, it could neither avoid the impedimenta in its way, nor grasp its necessary sustenance, nay, it would not be master of its own body, unless it felt it. The sense of touch then would seem to be absolutely indispensable for the safety and protection of the moving creature. And with touch Aristotle associates taste, as being a sort of touch. These two senses form, as we have said, the basis of sentient life. "The first sensation in all animals," says Aristotle, "is that of touch," and just as the lowest life of all, the power of assimilating nourishment, can be separated and exist apart from the higher powers, so also can touch exist apart from the higher senses. They exist for the well-being (*to eu*), the comfort, and higher aims of the creature, touch and taste are necessary to its very life.

But although touch is thus common to all animals, we should do it an injustice, indeed, were we to class it merely with the vegetative or nutritive power of the soul. Touch is capable of rising to some of its highest needs, and can indeed, on occasion, render the highest service. In his quiet way, Aristotle waxes enthusiastic over the wondrous powers of touch, powers so wondrous that he marvels whether it is indeed one sense or many. This basis-sense, to which we are all so much indebted, what can it not do? Even without special development or training, see what information it brings to us, and that concerning the most diverse things, warning us, putting us on our guard, whether an object is hot or cold, hard or soft, rough or smooth, moist or dry, and with its coadjutor the tongue, telling us whether it is sweet or bitter, large or small, thick or thin, and all this through a medium so strange, and unlikely to possess such powers, the flesh. Aristotle finally comes to the conclusion, as usual, that the real discernor is the something within, that immaterial something which, while it uses the flesh as its instrument, and so is one with it, is still distinct from it. "We are touched," he says, "with the flesh, not through it, as a shield and its holder are hit together" (ii. 11, 423 b, 11).



"Man," he says in another place (ii. 9, 421 a, 16), "is inferior to the animals in the keenness of his other senses, sight, hearing, smell; but in touch and taste, the two which are absolutely indispensable in the struggle for existence, he far surpasses all in accuracy and delicacy. Wherefore"—note!—"man is the most sensible of all animals." And he proceeds to deduce from this premise a curious conclusion. "The proof of this is," he says, "that in the race of man it is upon this sense (the sense of touch) that the distinction of 'gifted' and 'not gifted' by nature is based; for those who have hard or tough flesh are naturally dull, whereas those whose flesh is soft and tender are naturally clever!"

Here we have indeed a "touch" that is essentially Greek, an idea peculiar to a sensitive artistic people. The old word-coiner who first proudly described himself as *cheirotechnês* = having art in his hand, was doubtless quite of Aristotle's way of thinking. And even we, who rather plume ourselves in these latter days upon our "horny-handed sons of toil," do we not still bear witness to some subtle distinction which baffles definition when we speak of the exquisite "touch" of some "king of his hand"?<sup>1</sup> Nay, do we not place touch on a higher throne still, when we feel that a warm clasp of the hand speaks more directly to the heart of faithfulness and truth than do the sweetest of glances or the kindest of lip-promises.<sup>2</sup>

So much for the sense of touch. Aristotle's remarks on the other senses do not call for special comment. We may, however, just point out, for the sake of impartiality, that, far in advance of his age as our philosopher is in most things, he is yet liable to err and make a retrograde step like his neighbours. His conception of the action of light, for example, is inferior to that of his predecessor, Empedocles, who, years before, had maintained that light moves and requires a certain time to reach the earth from the sun. Aristotle (ii. 7, 418 b, 20) scouts this doctrine, and declares that light cannot possess motion, otherwise, in so large a space as that between the sun's rising and setting, it could not fail to be observed.

On the other hand, his definition (*ibid.*) of "light" is as beautiful as it is profound. "Light," he says, "is the REALITY (the *energeia*) which makes things visible," a definition that holds good in the spiritual no less than in the material world. Things exist, but before the energising light is shed upon them they are hidden from us; so far as we are concerned they are non-existent, and yet they exist. *E pur si muove!*—"More light!" cried Goethe on his deathbed, as the dawning realities of the unseen world broke upon his inner light. "I am come a light into the world," responds He who energises<sup>3</sup> in the souls of men "that whosoever believeth in Me should not walk in darkness, but should have the light of LIFE."

(b) *The Economy of Nature*.—Another point which Aristotle brings out very clearly is the wise economy shown in the designing and planning of natural things. That "everything in nature exists for an object," he has already told us; but now, in ascending the ladder of sentient life, he is struck by the fact that existing organs are made to serve a double purpose. The same organ which exists for the sake of mere animal existence in the lower creatures ministers in the higher to intellectual ends. "First the natural, then the spiritual." "Nature," says Aristotle (ii. 8, 420 b, 17), "makes use of the breathing apparatus for two works—as in the case of the tongue, which serves both for tasting and for speech. Of these two functions," he adds, "tasting is that which is necessary, and hence this function exists in many creatures; but for the purpose of interpreting thought, speech is present only in the higher

<sup>1</sup> *Cheironax*.<sup>2</sup> "He took her by the hand."<sup>3</sup> That worketh in you.

creatures. This is not absolutely necessary to life, but it exists for the sake of well-being (or happiness). In like manner, breathing serves a double purpose. On the one hand, it exists of necessity, on account of the inner bodily heat; and on the other hand, because of the voice, and in the latter case the reason is still the same—the well-being of the creature (*to eu*).

Tasting and internal heat are absolutely necessary to the life of the inferior animals; hence they, like ourselves, possess a tongue and a breathing apparatus. In the case of thinking man there is a higher function to be performed—the interpretation or communication of thought. But the same organs—the tongue and the lungs—are used for the attainment of both lower and higher ends. There is in nature, Aristotle would say, no casting aside of agents ready to hand—no wasteful introduction of new instruments when the old ones are susceptible of adaptation. “Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost,” is the rule stamped everywhere and on all things.

(c) *The “Mean” or Harmony of the Individual Senses.*—A third point in Aristotle’s ladder to which one must give heed is his insistence on the balance or proportion (*logos* = reasonable relationship) which exists by nature between the sense-organ and the object by which it is affected. “Every ‘too-much’ (*hyperbolē*),” he says (iii. 2, 426 a, 27), “spoils this proportion—as, for example, in the case of the hearing, any sound too high or too low works injuriously upon it. And the same rule holds good in regard to the other senses—to taste and sight—witness the effect of colours too bright or too sombre—and to smell, as evidenced by the action of odours too sweet or too powerful. Hence perception—the right exercise of the senses—is a sort of reasonable proportion—a *logos*.”

Here we have again that essentially Hellenic doctrine of the “right middle,” or “happy mean,” which we have traced so persistently in Greek reasoning from Hesiod downwards. The avoidance of the “too-much,” as well as of the “too little,” is to the Makers of Hellas an essential element of all sober thought. With Aristotle the doctrine of “the mean” assumes peculiar prominence, as we shall find presently when we come to inquire into his system of ethics. Here the existence of “the mean,” the observance of the due proportion, is taken as the standing natural rule whereby the senses are preserved in their integrity. “The ‘too-much’ gives pain, or destroys.”

(d) III. *The Discriminating Soul (to krinon)*—(a) *The Common Bond.*—We now come to an all-important question: What is it that keeps the senses together? that enables the soul to preserve its own unity in the midst of the impressions streaming in upon it through its five gateways of information? Let us look at the problem a little more closely.

When the soul receives impressions from any object through different sense-channels at one and the same time (as, to use Aristotle’s illustration, when an object is both yellow and bitter), each sense informs it of that which appertains to its own special domain. Sight tells it that the object is yellow, taste that it is bitter. Here, however, the work of the senses ends. The senses convey information to the soul, but they can make no use of the information thus obtained. The senses can only discriminate in their own sphere—sight between white and yellow, taste between sweet and bitter. What is it that combines these two pieces of information into one, and decides that the object which is the common property of both senses—inasmuch as it is both yellow and bitter—is bile?<sup>1</sup>

Paradoxical as it may appear, the combining something is a faculty whose

<sup>1</sup> We must not take offence at Aristotle’s illustrations. They strike us often much in the same way as Socrates’ “cobbler and carpenter” illustrations struck his countrymen.



primary function is not combining or synthesis, but separating or analysis. It is, in fact, a sort of higher perception, whose business it is to analyse, test, and discriminate between the five sets of perceptions brought to it by the senses, and then to combine them and arrive at a decision.<sup>1</sup>

To state the case in another way: When the senses recognise any object as "common" property—that is, as conveying impressions to several of them at the same time—they recognise that the object consists of a unity of different qualities; whereupon they also draw up into a unity, bring the information or impression which each has received to a higher court, and submit the whole to a higher power, which sits in judgment on the various impressions collectively. This is necessary, for what can "sweet" or "bitter" know of "white" or "yellow"? How can any one sense discriminate in the sphere of another?

"It is not possible," says Aristotle, "that the individual senses in their isolation can judge or discriminate that the 'sweet' is something different from the 'white'; but both must be revealed and made clear by some one faculty. . . . This one it is which must say that they are different," and this one supreme faculty is none other than to *krinon* = the sifting, discriminating faculty, the basis of that which, when exercised in higher functions, we call the judgment—in the every-day affairs of life—common sense.

But why, we may ask, is it necessary to have so many senses? Would it not have been better had one sense only discharged the duties of the five, and conveyed all impressions at once and directly to the soul? Not so, says Aristotle. In the exercise of the several senses he perceives a high purpose. The reason why we have several senses instead of only one combining all, is that, by this means, one sense corrects the impressions received by another, and details are more accurately known. Sight, for example, which is mainly concerned with colour, might not be able to distinguish details of size, were it not aided by touch—and so on. The information brought by the different senses, therefore, saves the judging faculty from arriving at a false, or defective, or one-sided conclusion.

So, says the old master (in his own way) with the psalmist: "We are fearfully and wonderfully made."

We, in our day, are inclined to treat the judgment as something exclusively belonging to mind; but there can be little doubt that the animals possess the critical faculty in the sphere of the senses, for what is the "sagacity" of the dog but the power of putting "this" and "that" together, and deciding on the merits of the case?

By the exercise of the critical faculty in the humble sphere of the senses, then, according to Aristotle's classification, this faculty becomes trained to use its powers in higher things. First the natural, then the spiritual—for, allied with mind, is not this discriminating, judging faculty, the one quality which shines out supreme in all the Aryan races. Have we not seen throughout that *krino*, I sift, I test—and then, and not till then—I decide, is the very faculty which made the Makers of Hellas, which enabled them to preserve the good handed over to them from other nations, and to discard and throw away the worthless and the bad? As in the childhood of the race the word (*krino*) itself was coined at the sifting of the barley and the throwing out of the husks in the old Aryan home.

<sup>1</sup> "A higher perception works in all the separate senses—the synthesis of the individual. There must be a common bond in the individual which holds together and combines the separate perceptions; man cannot fail to perceive, as it were, within himself through his different senses as though he were several individuals" (Bender, *in loc.*).

Hence, though Aristotle links the critical faculty with the senses as being their connecting bond, he yet places it on that higher level to which it manifestly belongs when he singles it out as one of the "marks" by which the soul may be known—movement, thought, discrimination (*krinein*), and perception.

(b) *Are the Senses to be Implicitly Trusted?*—Here we have another vital question—one, moreover, to which many persons would be ready to give the unqualified answer: "Certainly! I saw such and such a thing with my own eyes—I heard such and such a thing with my own ears—*ergo*, the impressions which I received must be true."

Must be true? This is a point which requires light—for in it the subjective and the objective meet. The opinion of an expert, of a trained observer, must be called in to decide. We must ask one who has diligently used both eyes and ears, and trained them to a degree of exactitude and precision beyond the power of the ordinary observer. Such an one is Aristotle—and what says he? Simply this, that the senses are not to be implicitly trusted, and he makes his verdict clear in a very simple way. He divides (iii. 3, 428 b, 18) perception into three stages: (1) Perception, he says, by each sense in its own sphere (*aisthēsis tōn idiōn*), is true or has but a slight measure of falsehood. For instance, the eye discerns quite correctly that a certain object is "white."

(2) In a second degree, where the perception has to do with that which is accidental to its own sphere, it is not so reliable. Here the particular sense may be deceived; as, for example, the eye may see, indeed, that the object described is white, but whether the object is this or that—(a white rock, or a white house, or a tree in white bloom, &c.), it may not be able clearly to distinguish. Deception on the part of sight is possible.

(3) In the third degree, which requires the greatest measure of accuracy, inasmuch as it has to do with such qualities as size—the risk of deception becomes intensified. What the eye takes to be a small object, for example, the sun—may really be of vast dimensions.

To sum up—in the first stage, in its own domain, a particular sense, say sight, is to be trusted: a certain object is white.

In the second stage, when another factor comes in, sight is not so trustworthy: the object is white, but we are doubtful as to its precise shape—is it a white rock or a white house?

In the third stage, when we come to define the size of the object, sight may be altogether at fault.

This perception by the senses is only true in its own sphere, the lowest. Not even the discriminating faculty (*to krinon*) can save it from error when it goes out of its own sphere; and the higher it ascends, the more likely is it to be deceived.

Thus, keen and practised observer as he is, Aristotle attaches no great weight to the impressions received by the senses. Their truthfulness requires to be tested, and their conclusions have to be modified and controlled by very different powers. Hence, in the *Metaphysics*, as we have already seen,<sup>1</sup> he will not allow the name of "wisdom" to knowledge as conveyed by the senses: "They only tell us what—they never tell us why." It is quite clear that even the discriminating faculty, *to krinon*, with all its sharpness, cannot help much, so long as it is chained to the senses. We must ascend yet another step in the ladder before we can breathe a freer air.

IV. **The Imaginative Faculty** (*phantastikē*). This freedom comes to us when we arrive at a stage where we are not actually fettered by the things of

<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, p. 640.



sense, although indeed, we are still dependent on them to a certain extent; and this stage is presented by the imagination or phantasy (*phantasia*).

What, then, is this phantasy? Clearly, says Aristotle (*ibid.* iii. 3), it is not perception, for the senses require an object to be perceived, and the energising medium which makes the object perceptible, as in the case of sight, light, and seeing; but we have phantasies or fancies when neither object nor medium is present, as in our sleep. Again, it is equally clear from the nature of our phantasies that what produces them is not the discriminating or judging faculty, either in its lower or its higher stage, neither is it the opinion (*doxa*) formed by the exercise of the judging faculty; for, he adds, faith or belief (*pistis*) follows opinion, but animals have no belief, and yet they possess phantasy.

If the imagination, then, is neither perception, nor discrimination, nor mind, what is it?

Phantasy, says Aristotle (429 a), "is a movement called forth by the energising of the senses." In order to understand this definition, let us recall that of the sense organ. "The sense organ," Aristotle told us (see *ante*, p. 661), "is that which is capable of receiving an impression from an object without the accompanying matter, as the wax receives the stamp of the seal without receiving its metal." Now we must advance a step further and note that the impression remains in the sense organ, clings to it, as it were, and becomes the source or basis of imagination, of *phantasia*, that is, of the power by which, as Aristotle puts it, we conjure up before us a *phantasma*, *i.e.* a real picture or mental view, and not a mere metaphor or picture in words. So closely is imagination rooted in the senses, that Aristotle traces the name *phantasia* to *phaos* = light, for sight, he says, is pre-eminently the means of perception, and without light there is no seeing. Phantasy, then, is that process by which impressions are photographed upon the sense organs, and which, often repeated, make those impressions permanent.

It is evident, of course, that imagination—the power of producing mental images—has its primary root in, and springs from, the senses, and is thus most closely linked to them and to the memory of which, in turn, it may be said to form the basis. But it does not end where it begins. How is it that imagination can shake itself free, not only from dependence on the objects of sense, but even from dependence on the impressions left by those objects, and conjure up for us pictures of a different order—visions of what eye hath not seen, nor ear heard? This happens only on a higher level of the ladder of life, when imagination is taken hold of, energised, and used by MIND.

There are therefore, as Aristotle puts it (iii. 2, 434 a, 5), two kinds of phantasy—

(a) The imagination of the senses (*phantasia aëthētikē*), which we share with the animals; and

(b) The imagination of the deliberative faculties (*phantasia bouleutikē*), possessed only by reasonable and reasoning creatures (*logistikoi*), those who are endowed with the *logos*.

That Aristotle should attribute imagination to the lower animals is a doctrine which rather staggers us on first presentation. He makes it very clear, however, in the following way: Some natural things possess, he says (ii. 3, 414 a, 29), as we have seen, only the power of assimilating nourishment, as in the case of the plants; others have in addition the power of feeling (*to aëthētikon*), but such creatures as have the power of feeling must also have that of desiring (*to orektikon*). . . . All animals have at least one of the senses, the sense of touch; and where feeling of any sort exists, there must also be

pleasure and pain, and the pleasurable and the painful; and where these exist, there must also be desire, and it is directed to pleasure. But how can a creature, even of the humblest grade, desire or long for anything unless it have before it a phantasy of the thing longed for, say some special kind of food? How can it even avoid the painful and seek the pleasurable? Only by the power of the phantasy or impression left upon its senses when the objects that produced pain or pleasure respectively are withdrawn.

This lower kind of phantasy, then, the animals must needs possess; but, as Aristotle points out (iii. 11, 434 a, 4), they possess it after their fashion. "Just as animals move about aimlessly, without fixed purpose or plan such as thinking man makes for himself, so phantasy exists in them in a certain sort of indefinite way (*aoristōs*)."

"Nature makes nothing in vain." This favourite doctrine of Aristotle's we have heard over and over again. Now let us hear the corollary: "She omits nothing that is necessary to her purpose" (iii. 9, 432 b, 21). If the effects of perception ceased with the immediate result produced, what poor, shiftless, hand-to-mouth creatures would the best of us be! Nature, or God in nature, however, has provided a remedy against this in the simple fact that impressions linger, are photographed more or less permanently upon and within us, and thus the countless "experiments" made by the senses have a chance of developing into or building "experience."

Imagination, of course, has all the defects of the senses; but it is nevertheless the source of great good. "From its permanence and its likeness to the perceptions of the senses," says Aristotle, "much is done through the imagination by living creatures—by some, for example, the animals, because of their having no mind (*nous*); by others, for example, men, because mind in them is often obscured by disease or sleep."

Here we leave imagination for the present, to return to it again shortly. Meanwhile, we may perhaps best sum up the results of Aristotle's teaching by realising the fact that we are now standing on the bridge between the lower and the higher powers of the soul. Imagination, on the one hand, touches the senses from which she springs; and on the other hand she reaches out to, and is grasped by, the energising mind. It is undoubtedly by means of the lower phantasia that the soul first swings herself free from the objects of sense. It is equally by means of the higher and divinely energised phantasia that she soars beyond the sphere of sense. Hence, there are spiritual no less than "scientific" uses of this great power, so often and so unjustly despised.

**V. Nous: Spirit and Mind.**—Hitherto we have been considering the lower powers of the soul—those which animals, in their measure, possess in common with man. Now, at length, we ascend to the special something that distinguishes man *quâ* man. This something—*nous*, spirit or mind—holds with Aristotle a place analogous to that which the *logos*, reason, holds with Plato. It is the supreme power—controlling and directing all the others. Everywhere, and on all occasions, Aristotle maintains with the greatest earnestness the supremacy of spirit, not only over matter, but over that which is linked to matter, perception by the senses—and he gives here as elsewhere certain exceedingly clear reasons for his conviction. Let us briefly follow his argument, and look with him at the question, first in a general, and then in a more special way. We ask, then, generally:—

(1) How and in what ways is SPIRIT superior to perception?

(a) First and chiefly, Aristotle answers, because it is spirit—mind and not matter. What, then, we ask again, do we mean by "spirit"? Aristotle gives us a definition in the words of Anaxagoras:—



(α) "*Nous* = spirit, is simple (= a simple essence, not composite in its nature);

(β) "It is unaffected by anything (*apathēs*, and therefore unchangeable in its own proper nature, and indestructible);

(γ) "Finally, it has nothing in common with anything else." Mind cannot possibly enter into communion with matter.

"Mind cannot be mingled with the body, for then it would receive some corporeal 'quality'; it would become 'cold' or 'warm';"—motions which have no applicability to spirit—"or it would be a sort of tool or organ—as, for example, of the sense—but spirit is nothing of the sort" (iii. 4, 429 a, 24). Spirit is not the tool, but the ruler of the senses. "The mind," as Anaxagoras says, "must be unmixed in order that it may rule," that is, as Aristotle interprets it, in order that it may know—for only the faculty that really knows is competent to take the lead and rule. Hence spirit must be alone and supreme upon the throne. None may share it with her, and "therefore," says Aristotle, "she hinders strange elements from entering, and blocks the way against them."—"That which is earthly is earthly, that which is spiritual is spiritual."

(b) Secondly, spirit differs from matter and what is linked to it—viz. perception by the senses, in this again, that whereas the senses are weak, spirit is strong.

"When an organ of sense is subjected to any impression exceedingly intense (*sphodra aestheton*)," says Aristotle (iii. 4, 429 a, 29), "the exercise of its power becomes impossible. Thus, hearing is dulled or ruined by violent noise, sight by things that dazzle the eye, and so on. But the mind, when its attention is engrossed by anything demanding all its power (*sphodra noeton*), is not impaired thereby—not the less able to grasp the more insignificant things with which it has to deal—nay! it does this all the better!"

Hence, the argument implies, mind is something not only higher than, but essentially different in its nature from perception by the senses.

Let us bear this reasoning well in mind—we shall have to refer to it again.

(c) Thirdly, spirit is superior to perception in this, that whereas perception has to do with things that are without, spirit has to do with things that are within. Perception is absolutely dependent on the senses and the objects perceived by them—spirit can rise above all outward things, and is absolutely independent of them. "A man," says Aristotle, "can THINK whenever he will (he has the power within him); but he cannot perceive without the objects of perception (*i.e.* he is dependent upon them)."

(d) Fourthly: spirit is superior to perception in this, that whereas perception has to do with the individual—spirit has to do with the universal. "Perception," says Aristotle (ii. 5, 417 b, 19), "is directed to the things that are without, and to individual things, seeing and hearing. Knowledge (*epistēmē*) is the universal, and it is somewhere in the soul itself"—and this in two different ways: (α) The materials of knowledge are indeed gleaned from without, but knowledge itself is that which goes on within the soul, the process of generalising from—*i.e.* sifting and digesting spiritually—the materials brought to it. (β) There is yet a higher process still wherein the spirit retires within itself, thinks the thoughts peculiar to its own proper nature, and absolutely detaches itself from all exterior things.

(e) Fifthly, and as the necessary outcome of the foregoing, the spirit is the only "Freeman" among the powers of the soul. All the other powers are chained to the body, spirit alone is free.

We recollect Aristotle's famous definition of the soul as being the "en-

telechy," the perfecting of the body.<sup>1</sup> This is true of it as a whole—the nutritive perceiving, judging, imagining, thinking faculties all form part of this wondrous perfecting of the body—but the thinking part is something more.

We recollect again Aristotle's famous assertion that body and soul are one, as the wax and the form stamped on the wax are one.<sup>2</sup> Now we have to add to this assertion the qualifying statement that, although "it is," indeed, "clear that the soul is not separate from the body," yet that this applies only to certain parts which are not separate from the body. "But," says Aristotle (ii. 1, 413 a, 3), "there is nothing to hinder a separation in other parts, because they are not the entelechy of a body" simply. In what way is the high-soaring spirit of man necessary to the perfecting of his body? The nutritive faculty which prompts him to sustain his body, the perceiving faculty which leads him to his food and teaches him to avoid dangers, the judging faculty which binds together the impressions of the senses, the imaginative faculty which arouses desire within him—all these are amply sufficient for the preservation of the body. But wherein is this power to puzzle with abstract problems, this power to retire within itself, this power to hold high communion with things unseen, with God Himself—wherein is all this necessary to the perfecting of the physical and material body? Clearly, the spirit of man is something vastly more than the entelechy of a body, however richly, nay, marvellously prepared to receive it. Clearly, the energy of the spirit can by no means be confined to the body or the things of the body.

(f) Lastly, spirit is on the throne of the *synolon*, the compound being called "man," because it is the HOME OF THE IDEAS (*topos eidōn*)—a reason which is itself a noble idea and the culminating point in the argument (iii. 4, 429 a, 27). To understand it aright, however, there is one point which we must also weigh and endeavour to grasp (as best we may) in Aristotle's own sense, and this is, that *nous*—

- (a) The something which is spirit and not matter ;
- (b) The something which is so different from matter in its nature, that in place of being "rubbed away" by the conflict with hardnenses, it only grows the stronger thereby ;
- (c) The something whose aim is directed to things within ;
- (d) The something which gathers up the individual fragments of knowledge and deduces from them the true knowledge, the why from the manifold what ;
- (e) The something which can rise to communion with the invisible ;
- (f) The something which is, in short, the home of the ideas, is not one, but two. In other words, Aristotle believed that the spirit within us is dual, twofold in its nature.

The subject is, unfortunately, not developed so clearly as one could wish, probably for the very good reason that it treats of a mystery beyond the power of the finite mind either to grasp or express adequately. Still, we venture to think that Aristotle's conception of the dual mind, the two parts which form the whole spirit of man, is not so obscure as some commentators would have us believe. *Peirateon!* Let us try, at all events, to follow in all humility the hints which the master throws out.

**The Dual Mind.**—The first point to be noted, then, is that the two parts of the mind are not on an equality. Here, as elsewhere, there is a higher and a lower. "As in all things natural," says Aristotle (iii. 5, 430 a, 10), "we distinguish between matter, the possibility to become, and something else which is the cause and the bringer-forth—something by which everything is

<sup>1</sup> See p. 656.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 661.



effected, and which bears the same relation to that on which it works as the relation which art bears to matter, so these differences must of necessity exist in the soul. Mind is partly of such a nature that it can become everything (the passive mind), partly such that it can effect everything (the active mind). And this latter," he adds, "is a sort of state or condition like unto light; for in some way light makes real the colours which are potential in things, and energises the latent colours, *i.e.* makes them visible. And in like manner the active mind energises and makes real the powers which are latent or slumbering in the passive mind—brings them to light, as it were.

Elsewhere Aristotle points out that the passive mind, even when energised by the active mind, always remains on a lower level, and has a distinct function to perform. This is implied in the very significant names which he gives to the two parts of mind :—

(a) The lower or passive mind, in its energised state, when it is actively fulfilling its part in the soul-economy, he calls *dianoia* = thought, indeed, but discursive thought, that kind of thought which concerns itself with a multiplicity of things, with the passing interests of life, and is indispensably linked, through imagination and desire, to the senses. This lower thought, inasmuch as it always has a practical aim, Aristotle speaks of later as *dianoia praktikē* = the practical mind.

(b) The higher or active mind, on the other hand, he describes emphatically as *nous per se*, *noein*—THOUGHT worthy of the name—or *theorein*, contemplation and reflection, on the highest things—things not to be perceived by the senses, summing up later (iii. 9) both aspects in the designation *nous theoretikos*, the thinking mind.

Did Aristotle then despise that practical understanding or good judgment which is absolutely necessary for the right guidance of the affairs of life, and which is implied in the term *dianoia praktikē*? By no means! Had the question been put to him directly, he would doubtless have said of the practical mind as he said of perception of the senses: it is excellent, nay, indispensable in its own sphere, but there is something more excellent and more indispensable still, and that is mind-in-itself—*noein*, *theorein*, *nous theoretikos* = the thinking mind. And thus we proceed to ask yet another question :—

Why is the active thus superior to the passive mind?—a question which Aristotle answers very briefly, but very decidedly, thus :—

Firstly, the active mind is superior because of its very nature. The passive and the active mind are indeed both spirit, but yet they are essentially distinct—the one is worked upon, the other works. "This energising mind," he says, "is separate from matter, unchangeable (*apathēs*), pure and unmixed (with material elements), and in its essence (*ousia*) it is reality—*energeia*! And that which works and produces (*to poioun*) is always more worthy of honour than that which is merely passive, and the principle (*archē* = cause) than the matter on which it works" (iii. 5, 430 a, 17).

(b) Secondly, the active mind is the superior because, being *energeia*, it is necessarily the energiser of the ideas. They, as we have seen, have, according to Aristotle, their home in the mind, in contra-distinction to the view of Plato, who held that the ideas, the patterns of earthly things, exist only in heaven. Let us just remind ourselves here of what both these great philosophers mean by the "idea." The idea is the spiritual as opposed to the material; the abstract as opposed to the concrete; the conception of a thing as opposed to the thing itself—in a word, the form that lives on when the matter which it laid hold of and on which it worked has perished.

We remember Aristotle's argument against the notion that the soul is

material, because it can recognise material things.<sup>1</sup> "Like discerns like," it is true, but on this reasoning, the soul, being composed of material elements, could only discern material elements. How is it that—to say nothing of her power of discerning spiritual things, God, truth, justice—how is it she can discern a material whole, quite different from herself, say, a stone? The answer, as we saw, was that she discerns not the thing itself, but its form, its idea. "The stone," says Aristotle, "is not in the soul, but its form, its idea is."

And coming to things spiritual, to great truths, such as justice, righteousness, the good, God himself, they also, as ideas or conceptions, have their home in the spirit of man. Their eternal pattern, we say with Plato, is in heaven, but we also say with Aristotle that they exist in the soul of man. But how? "They speak truly," says Aristotle (iii. 4, 429 a, 27), "who maintain that the soul is the abode of the ideas, but the statement must be taken with a limitation. She is not so as a whole, but only as the thinking part, and the ideas are within her, not in actuality [not in *entelecheia* as fully developed] but in possibility [*dynamei*]." The ideas are there, but without the light of the energising mind they would for ever remain hidden, as colours remain hidden in the darkness. The powers of the soul lie dormant, slumbering, until they are awakened by that something which Aristotle compares to light. And what is that something? It is thought. "That part of the soul," says Aristotle, "which we call spirit (= *nous*)—and by spirit I mean that by which the soul thinks (*dianoeitai*) and understands—is not real [is not in the *energeia* of existence] before it thinks [*noei*]."<sup>2</sup> And again (iii. 4. 429 b 30), "We must conceive of the mind (in its pristine state) as being like a tablet (*grammateion*) on which nothing is as yet actually written." As soon as the soul begins to reflect, to think in the true sense = *noein*, to make use of the powers within, she energises these dormant powers, and the writing on the tablet begins. But this is the work of the active energising mind. It is the writer; the passive mind is simply the tablet or instrument of its activity. Elsewhere Aristotle compares the soul as the abode of the ideas to the hand. "The hand," he says, "is the instrument of instruments; and in like manner the spirit (*nous*) is the idea of ideas."

"As the hand is the instrument which enables us to make use of other artificial instruments," comments Bender, *in loc.*, "so the spirit is the (inner, immanent) idea which is necessary to the apprehension of other ideas." The energising spirit, therefore, is that which inspires and directs every other faculty in man. The passive mind, the imaginative and the critical, the sensitive and the nourishing faculties—all are at once the basis of her activity, the matter on which and by means of which she works, and yet without her they are but matter—everything in possibility, nothing in reality.

We have now asked and received answers to two great questions concerning the spiritual nature of man:—

(1) Why is spirit superior to the other powers in man?

(2) As regards the dual spirit, why is the active superior to the passive?

We next proceed to the third and final question, that which is, after all, the most important to each one of us:—

(3) What is this energising spirit? Aristotle does not leave us long in doubt. He says at once (iii. 5, 430 a, 22): "It is the immortal and eternal" in man.

"Since spirit is apart and distinct from matter (*choristheis* = severed and

<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, p. 655.

<sup>2</sup> The reader will perceive the distinction drawn here between *dianoeitai* and *noei*.



separated), it alone is what its nature is—it alone is undying and everlasting (*athanaton kai aidion*)."

It alone is what its nature is (literally, it alone is the very thing that it is), and what is its nature? Aristotle has just told us in what its essence, its *ousia*, consists.

It is apart and distinct from matter (*chōristos*).

It is unchangeable (*apathēs*), and therefore indestructible.

It is pure and unmixed (with baser elements, *amigēs*).

It is *energeia*, reality, actuality.

It is thought.

Sum up all these, and we shall find that we have before us the very attributes of God. God, as we recollect, is also apart and distinct from matter.<sup>1</sup> He also is unchangeable and pure—HE is *energeia*, HE is THOUGHT.

The "energising spirit" of the Greek is, then, none other than the "breath of God" of the Hebrew.

"The LORD GOD breathed into his nostrils the breath of LIFE, and man became a living soul."

"Let us make man in our image."

The passive spirit, the latent powers and capacities of the soul.

The breath of life.

The energising spirit, which brings with it activity and life.

"I am the Light of the World."

This energising spirit is as the light that reveals the latent colours.

... "This is that Light which lighteneth every man that cometh into the world."

"My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. It is God that worketh in you both to will and to do."

This is the Spirit that worketh, and is therefore to be had in honour.

"Now I live, yet not I but CHRIST liveth in me."

This is the hand that makes use of the instruments. This is the IDEA of ideas.

Does Aristotle's doctrine of the "Dual Spirit" in man present any difficulties to the Christian? We trow not. It may indeed be dark, dim, and "undeveloped." But let us ask were the intimations of the prophets any clearer? No whit. Yet both stand out in the refulgence of the Light of lights so that "he that runs may read" their import.

We have now made with Aristotle the ascent of the ladder of life. We have climbed with him from the humblest living thing that shares mere vegetative existence to the very throne of God. Here, as elsewhere, with Aristotle, the climax is the same, the scale of knowledge, of inquiry, of life, inevitably leads up to the source and consummation of all knowledge, of all inquiry, of all life, God, at once the object-cause and the working-cause, the *energeia*, of His creatures.

**The Immortality of the Spirit.**—We are now in a position to understand Aristotle's doctrine of the immortality of the Spirit, a doctrine which has its root in the tripartite nature of man, that threefold distinction between body, soul, and spirit, which is emphasised by St. Paul no less than by the philosopher. This distinction is well brought out in a passage which we quote at length from our author, premising that what is obscure in it will become clear as we proceed.

(1) Body and soul are only the instruments of the Spirit. "If we say,"

<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, p. 650.

reasons Aristotle (i. 4, 408 b, 11), "that the soul is 'angry,' it is as though we were to maintain that the soul 'weaved' or 'built'. It is perhaps better not to say that the soul 'pities,' or 'learns,' or 'thinks' (or itself does anything), but that the MAN does this by the soul."

(2) Body and soul act and re-act one upon the other: "Not that we should say this," he continues, "meaning thereby that movement (*i.e.* power to change) lies in the soul; but that movement now comes to her, now proceeds from her, as, for example, perception comes to her from such and such an object, but memory proceeds from her to the organs of sense (and works upon them), so that they either move or remain still." The meaning is that the body works on the soul through the senses, the eye, and can convey impressions to her. The soul, again, by memory, works on the body, on the senses, and the limbs. Thus, under the influence of a terrible recollection, the limbs may become stiff and refuse to act, whilst a joyful memory will send a thrill through the whole man. So intimately are body and soul connected, so closely are they linked together, that the one necessarily shares the fate of the other.<sup>1</sup>

(3) The spirit is something different, and apart from body and soul. "But the Spirit," he adds (*nous*), "which dwells within us, seems to be an ESSENCE, and is not destroyed. The nearest approach to destruction would be the weakness of old age; but this," he argues, "may be explained in the same way as in the case of the organs of sense. If an old man could obtain an eye made in such and such a way, he would see as well as a youth. Hence it follows that old age does not weaken because something has happened to the mind, but because that in which the mind dwells (*i.e.* the body) is affected, as in the case in drunkenness or in disease. And as regards pure thought and reflection (*noein* and *theorein*), these are weakened because something else within [a kind of spiritual eye, corresponding to the bodily organ] has decayed, while the thinking power itself remains unaffected, and consequently unchanged (*apathēs*)."

(4) The spirit, however, is not immortal as a whole. Only the active mind, the *energeia* is immortal; the passive mind is mortal. "But passing thoughts (thoughts concerning the things of mortality, *dianoeisthai*),<sup>2</sup> and love and hatred are not affections which belong to the unchanging spirit, but to that which holds the spirit (its shrine, body and soul together), and these affections are there only because it holds the spirit," *i.e.* they exist only so long as the spirit has need of them, so long as it dwells in its earthly shrine. "Therefore," argues Aristotle, "when the body decays, the spirit neither remembers nor loves, because these are not powers of the spirit, but of the common union (of body, soul, and spirit) which is now destroyed. The spirit itself, however, would seem to be something more Divine and unchangeable" (*apathēs*, unaffected by decay). This distinction between the immortal and the mortal spirit in man is further emphasised in another passage (iii. 5, 430 a, 22) with which we are already partly acquainted, and in which Aristotle is speaking explicitly of the dual spirit. "Since spirit is apart and separate in itself," he says, "it alone is what its nature is, it alone is immortal and eternal. But it has no recollection, for the active spirit cannot be affected (by memories or impressions of the past) and the passive spirit is mortal."

The passive spirit, with body and soul, is that which forms the basis of the active spirit's work on earth. When that work is over, body, soul, and

<sup>1</sup> See Bender, *in loc.*, 33.

<sup>2</sup> Note again the distinction drawn between *noein*, *theorein*=thought *per se* and reflection, and *dianoeisthai*=trivial, discursive thought.



passive spirit together decay, the godlike and eternal *energeia* alone survives, it alone is immortal.

Such is Aristotle's doctrine of immortality. It contains a measure of truth, and a grand measure, for which we may well be thankful, but is it the whole truth?

We trow not. As it stands, it satisfies no real longing of the human mind.<sup>1</sup>

(1) It does away with the identity of the individual spirit, for the active spirit would seem to be simply absorbed at death into the Divine *energeia*; hence it does away with all true life, even of the spirit as applicable to beings framed as we are. A spirit that cannot love or hope, that has no memory of the past, is a something which is a contradiction in terms.

(2) It does away with the whole intellectual and spiritual lifework of the individual that, as we take it, is the impress stamped upon the passive spirit by the energising activity of the Divine idea within, while if this Divine thought, this tablet on which the active spirit has been writing, sinks into nothingness with the body, the Divine idea falls far short of that which Aristotle describes as its goal and aim, that on which it has been expending its energy, does not reach God any more than does the humblest plant.

(3) It does away with the doctrine of a future retribution—that foreshadowing of a time when every one shall give account of himself to the Father of Spirits, and the inequalities and injustices of this life will be redressed—a doctrine which worked so mightily in Plato, and to the truth of which our own secret consciousness bears witness. The vision in the *Gorgias* of the soul issuing forth at death bearing the impress stamped upon it of its own deeds, good or bad—shaped and fashioned by them into likeness or unlikeness to God—comes much nearer to the truth as set forth in Aristotle's own great doctrines of cause and effect—of the influence of habit—than does the notion that the Divine *energeia* will survive, while its own spiritual and intellectual handiwork perishes.

The fact is that, as stated above, Aristotle's doctrine of the dual spirit is undeveloped. As we possess it, it contains indeed the germ of an eternal truth, but the flower and the fruit are as yet hidden in the germ. We have only a hint, a glorious hint, of a truth to be revealed. And we may note that Aristotle himself is conscious that he is face to face with a mystery: "It is not yet clear," he says (ii. 1, 413 a, 8), "whether the soul is the actuality of the body in the same way that the sailor is of his ship." The sailor steps out of his ship with all his powers and all the faculties that make him a distinct individual intact. Does the soul leave the bark in which she has sailed through life, bereft of half her faculties—of imagination, of critical judgment, of love and hope, of memory, of the dear-bought experience of the voyage?

We say with Aristotle that such a doctrine as this is indeed "not yet clear."

Another proof of Aristotle's hesitation in accepting his own conclusions is to be found in the way in which he speaks of the departed in the *Ethics*. There they are represented as knowing what is happening upon earth, and as rejoicing over their descendants. Is this a concession to "popular" feeling?

<sup>1</sup> *Zeller's Notes on the Doctrine of the Dual Spirit*.—"The active working spirit is not only the Divine in man, but it is really not distinct from the Divine mind itself. On the other side, we can hardly designate the supra-mundane Divine spirit as a part of the human soul, and as that which dwells in the individual, and becomes at birth the human mind. But we seek in vain for a solution of this difference in Aristotle, and just as little can we glean further details of his views on the passive mind. When, therefore, we see that the opinions held as to the exact meaning of Aristotle's views on the double spirit diverge widely, this is due to the impossibility of bringing these views into full harmony."—Zeller, ii. 440.

—Aristotle is not the man to pay much heed to “popular” feeling. It is the outcome of a true human and Divine instinct which not even the necessity of pushing his theories to a certain conclusion can altogether silence or overrule. We may well believe that Aristotle’s *Vernichtung*—his annihilation—of the passive spirit at death is due to his eagerness to annihilate Plato’s doctrine of “Recollection.”<sup>1</sup> If the memory is made to die and all earthly impressions fade away from the departing soul—then that doctrine is rendered impossible. Neither the doctrine of “Recollection,” however, nor its antidote, the doctrine of the annihilation of a portion of the human spirit has any claim to our serious consideration. They rank among the ingenious speculations which find a place among the fossils of human thought. The theory of “Recollection” has long been replaced by a truly fruitful thought.

Such is Aristotle’s doctrine of immortality. It contains a measure of truth, and a grand measure—but is it the whole truth? Does it satisfy a Christian? We trow not. What, to us, is a spirit without its own identity? Wherein to us would be the joy of a spirit-life, an immortality, without love, without memory—with no recollection of the way we have come, of our past activities—no recognition of those who have been dearer to us than our very selves—no adoring gratitude to pour forth to the FATHER of our spirit for His loving kindness in the past—no thought of Him who has been one with us, the life and light of our spirit—no remembrance of Him who has guided us by the way and given to us His fellowship?

If all the stamp and impress of our little day on earth ceases with death; then the spiritual stamp must cease with the rest—on Aristotle’s own showing—for this is the result in part of the discipline of life and the spirit’s own activities.

Truly, life and immortality, in any real sense, first came to light by Jesus Christ. In union with Him, the passive, no less than the active spirit survives—must survive, for it is that whereon the idea of ideas was worked. Jesus Christ says—not only “He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood dwelleth in Me”—but also “I dwell in him”—in him, in that living personality, in that individuality which was made in my image and is indestructible.

**The Motive Power.**—We now pass to a question which Aristotle treats in a much more satisfactory way, and which we with him may consider last as forming—in reality, although not intentionally—a bridge between his psychology and his ethics. The question is an elementary one, asked, as we remember, at the very beginning of the inquiry—the question over which philosophers and sages broke their heads in vain.

**What Produces Movement?**—We recollect the various answers given to the question—the heat-theory, the dancing atoms, or sun-mote theory—and so on.<sup>2</sup> Nowhere does Aristotle show himself greater than in his handling of this self-same subject, for from it he deduces moral considerations by the side of which the reasonings of Democritus and the others are little better than trifling impertinences.

Alluding to these theories, he says (i. 3, 406 b, 24): “In no such way does the soul move a living creature—but by some sort of definite choice and conscious thought.” All the other so-called causes concerned bodily heat, the mechanical apparatus; bones, joints, muscles, sinews—he treats as the Socrates of Plato treated them<sup>3</sup>—as what they are in reality, secondary and subsidiary causes, subordinate to the prime mover—choice and thought, or, as he later expresses it, desire and thought.

**What is Movement?**—It is always something done with an object on

<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, p. 598.      <sup>2</sup> See *ante*, p. 560.      <sup>3</sup> See *ante*, p. 558.



account of some end), and that object, says Aristotle, is a practical one, and it takes place by the help of imagination (*phantasia*) and desire (*orexis*). For nothing moves, he adds (iii. 9, 432 b, 14), except when force is employed, but through the desire either of obtaining something or of avoiding something.

Desire, then, the stimulus to movement, has itself to be stimulated by imagination—the impression left upon the senses, the picture conjured up, of some delight to be enjoyed, or some disagreeable thing to be fled from.

There are thus two powers which can move—imagination as a part of mind (as *dianoia*) and desire. There is, however, a difference between these two powers. *Dianoia*, practical mind, controlled by reason, is indeed always directed to the attainment of an object, but it cannot move without desire; whereas desire is by no means chained to reason, but moves without reason, for animal appetite (*epithymia*, the craving of the passions) is a kind of desire. Reason (*nous*) is always right, but unfortunately, desire and imagination are sometimes right, sometimes wrong. Not that they go wrong intentionally, for the impulse proceeds from the thing desired, and this is always either the good or the apparently good. What is sought is, in fact, the practical good.

Here we have the old Socratic theory: No one desires what he knows to be bad, but, unfortunately again, the individual may be mistaken, and in his blindness desire the bad.

**The Conflict between the two Powers of Desire.**—There are many faculties in the soul, continues Aristotle (iii. 10, 433 a, 31):—

The nutritive (*to threptikon*);

The sentient (*to aisthēton*);

The imaginative (*to phantastikon*);

The reflective (*to noēton*);

The deliberately willing (*to bouleutikon*);

The impulsively craving (*to orektikon*);

—and it is evident that each of these will have its own special desires, and that these must of necessity often be at variance with one another.

**The Basis of the Moral Conflict.**—This happens, he continues, when reason (the *logos*) and passion (*epithymia*) are opposed to each other—(and here Aristotle makes one of his profoundest remarks)—and this opposition takes place in those creatures that have the perception of time—a “time” sense, or sense of proportion, as it were; “for while mind seeks to lead desire with reference to the future, passion urges it to the gratification of the present,” says Aristotle, “the pleasure of the moment seems absolutely delightful and absolutely good, when we do not look to the future.”

The soldier on the battlefield may be taken as an illustration of the opposing forces of desire. At the critical moment when the enemy is gaining ground, and he sees his comrades cut down on either side, while desire for immediate safety is urging flight, with all the instinctive strength of the love of life, reason rises, yea, even in the despised imagination, with the thought of the fatherland, of home, of freedom, of the sacred cause. To what form of desire will the man yield? To desire for his own safety of the present, or to desire for the future safety of his country?

This, in smaller, humbler ways, is the conflict of desires perpetually waging war within us—the rebellion in the state of man, as Plato puts it, wherein the lower nature seeks to get the upper hand, the serpent and the lion to enchain the man. Every imagination, as Aristotle puts it, belongs either to reason or to the senses, is either *logistikē* or *æsthetikē*. The latter is shared in by the lower animals; the higher, which brings with it the conflict, belongs to man

alone—to man *quâ* man, for he alone has the time-sense, he alone has the thought of the future, and can measure its tremendous importance.

It is, however, characteristic of Aristotle's whole system, and a necessary distinction from his conception of immortality as limited to one part of the spirit, that he does not allow his highest spirit to take part in the conflict of desires. The *nous theoretikos* does not desire any practical end; this is the function of the *nous praktikos*. Hence, the extreme significance of the remark that the conflict of desires takes place only in creatures possessed of the sense of time does not seem to have been probed by Aristotle himself. He does not see its far-reaching consequences; he does not place time in opposition to eternity, as does Plato. In this respect, as in his whole treatment of the doctrine of immortality, Aristotle is halting, dim, uncertain, and far inferior to his great master.

## THE IDEA OF GOD

### I.—The Nature of God—the Eight Conditions

Aristotle's self-imposed task, then—the task which he began in the *Metaphysics*—was the building up of a higher and truer explanation of the nature of the great first cause. This task he did not live to complete. As we have stated, it is not probable that either the whole of the *Metaphysics*, or its present arrangement, is due to the philosopher himself. The work is fragmentary and unsystematic. After the elaborate prelude (the ladder of knowledge), and the historical sketch, which we have glanced at, there follows much more, also of an introductory character, and it is not until we arrive at the twelfth book that we are really face to face with Aristotle's conception of the first cause—that cause which was to explain the origin of movement, and of all things.

And now that we have arrived at this stage, we must ask the reader not to be repelled by the form into which Aristotle's speculations are cast. The shell of his thought is necessarily a hard one for us, but the kernel is precious, as we shall see.

Aristotle, then, postulates certain conditions<sup>1</sup> which must of necessity find their fulfilment if we are to have any adequate explanation of the existing order of things:—

**The First Condition: the First Cause must be Eternal and Unmoved.**—There are, says Aristotle, three kinds of substances (or essences). Two of these belong to the domain of physics.

(a) One is perishable = plants and animals.

(b) The other, eternal (= heaven and the heavenly bodies): and both belong to physics, because they partake of movement.

*The third essence is unmoved.*—This definition he repeats further on. "We have assumed," he says, "that there are three substances, two of which belong to the things of nature, whilst the third is unmoved. Of this last we must now speak, and show that of necessity there must be some eternal unmoved essence.

That God must be eternal is self-evident to us, but we fail to see at first why Aristotle should lay such emphasis upon the "unmovableness of God." To discover the reason of this we must go back to those books of the

<sup>1</sup> It is, perhaps, necessary to premise that these conditions are not found grouped together as given in the following pages, but scattered through the *Metaphysics*, and especially the twelfth book.



*Physics*—the inquiry into the things of nature—in which Aristotle had already laid the scientific foundation of the doctrine which he developed in the *Metaphysics*. There he had proved—

(1) "That everything that moved must of necessity be moved by something outside of itself, even when the thing seems to move itself." Every living moving thing, he says, consists of two parts—an actual part, one that moves, and a potential part, one that is moved—but even the actual part, the part that moves, according to Aristotle, receives its impulse from without (*Phys.*, vii. 1 *et seq.*; viii. 5). Nothing in nature, therefore, moves itself as a whole.

(2) Hence, to find that which gives the impetus of movement to all else, we must go back to something which is not subject to influence from without—something which does move as a whole; something which has no merely potential part, and therefore cannot be moved or changed from without.

(3) Go back as far as we may, and trace it up through endless links, we must finally arrive at a first cause. There is no going on *ad infinitum*. A stick may move a stone, but it does so only in so far as the stick itself is moved by the hand of the man who holds it, and who is himself unmoved (*Phys.*, viii. 5, 256 a, 4-8).

On this foundation Aristotle builds in the *Metaphysics*, and the very first stone in the structure is the unmovableness and eternity of God. "There must be, of necessity, some eternal unmoved essence." The "unmovableness" of God is really, in Aristotle's eyes, His immutability: "He changeth not."

**Second Condition: the Nature of the First Principle must be the Good, otherwise it could not be Eternal.**—There arises a difficulty here, says Aristotle, which may be stated thus: "Whether does that of which we wish to speak, the good and the best-in-itself, belong to the first principles or not? or did it arise later?" And he proceeds to state an argument which is not without its bearing on the questions that exercise men's minds in our own day. "In this question the theologians (Hesiod) seem to agree with those of our present-day philosophers, who say that the good and the beautiful did not exist in the beginning, but have appeared with the advancing development of nature. . . . The old poets had this notion, for they say that it is not the first powers—such as night and Uranus, and chaos or Oceanus—that rule now, but Zeus . . . whereas they who do not entirely accept the mythic traditions, such as Pherecydes, and some others, place the first Creator as the best, as do also the Magi; and of the later philosophers, such as Empedocles and Anaxagoras, for the one makes friendship, the other mind, to be an element."

Is God, then, the great first principle, on a level with nature, that development may be postulated of His attributes, the good and the best-in-itself? "It would be astonishing, indeed," comments Aristotle, "if the first and the eternal and the self-sufficing in the highest degree did not possess this first (essential quality)—self-sufficingness and eternal life (soundness = *soteria*) in the form of the good. For by nothing else than the good alone does anything become immortal or self-sufficing." (The bad, like strife, is a disintegrating quality.)

The good has ever been in existence. It is the good that predominates in the universe, otherwise it must long since have gone to pieces. It is the good towards which the universe is moving.

**Third Condition.**—"There must be," he continues, "a first cause of such nature that its essence is *energeia*"—that untranslatable term which we call actuality, reality. (See the Definitions, p. 656.) "If there were a Mover or Creator which did not actually work," says Aristotle, "there could be no

motion. Potentiality cannot be ascribed to the first cause—mere capacity for work, because capacity (even the capacity for existence) may lie dormant and not proceed to actuality or reality. The first cause must have existed in all its reality, and, consequently, must have been ceaselessly at work from all eternity, communicating the impetus of its own intense life, its reality, to others. There must be a first cause whose essence is *energeia*." And yet, while thus the cause of movement and life in others, God must be, Himself, according to the first condition, unmoved. Why? Because "movement" is, to Aristotle, "change" (see the Definitions), the transition from possibility to reality. There is no mere "possibility" in God. "He is," as Plato says, "alone expresses Him." He is intense Reality, from which all possibility of change, of progress, of movement is excluded. Hence God is, of necessity, the Unmoved Mover.

**Fourth Condition.**—Hence God must, equally of necessity, be immaterial, apart from matter. For matter has to do with potentiality, the mere capacity for being moved or energised, and matter is perishable. But the Divine is itself pure energy and eternal.

**Fifth Condition.**—The Divine essence must be One, without parts and indivisible, without suffering or change. "From what has been said," says Aristotle, "it is clear that there is some substance, essence, eternal, unmoved and separate from the things of sense. And it has been proved also that it is impossible that the conception of 'magnitude' (or limit) can belong to this Substance. Much rather is it without parts and indivisible, for It moves in boundless time, and that which has boundless power (*dynamis*) is not limited . . . the conception of limitation cannot be attributed to God. Neither may the term, 'boundless magnitude,' be used, for there is no such thing. Moreover, the Divine nature is without suffering (*apathēs*) and without change." According to Aristotle, our human ideas of "magnitude," size or limit, "suffering" (the being affected by anything from without), or "change" are all equally inapplicable to the Divine nature.

"Since there is a something which moves itself without being moved, as pure energy, this cannot possibly change in any way" (*Met.*, xii. 1072, b, 7 *et seq.*).

**Sixth Condition.**—The Divine, as the energising force, must have been in existence first. If we say with Hesiod, and the old thinkers, that all things proceeded from night (chaos)—or, if we hold with the natural philosophers that all things were in one another (*i.e.* mixed in one common substance, from which they afterwards separated)—in either case, "we affirm the impossible. For how can anything be moved, unless there be a moving cause = energy? Matter, for instance, does not move itself: the skill of the builder is necessary for this; neither is it the earth that brings forth of herself, but the seed. . . . For nothing is moved by chance; but there must always be a definite cause. Things are moved by Nature, or by force, or by mind, or in some other way." How, then, does the Divine move?

**Seventh Condition.**—The first moving principle moves as the object of love. We ask the reader to ponder these words. No grander thought ever inspired a human mind—GOD moves as the OBJECT OF LOVE. How can that which is itself unmoved, move others? Simply by being in itself (*a*) the object of desire: that to which all reaches out, towards which all stretches, for which all longs and yearns; and also (*b*) by being in itself the object of thought and reflection. Passion, says Aristotle, longs for that which seems beautiful (the beauty of the senses); but the object desired by reflection is "That which is beautiful." And he goes on to picture this true beauty, this true



good, this first, this best-in-itself, this simple energising essence, as standing apart in a line by and for itself—the line of the unmoved—in contradistinction, as it were, to that other line of the things which are moved and changed by their very stretching towards, their vehement longing for the great object of desire. God moves as the object of love.

**Eighth Condition.**—The life of God must be the life of thought. In no other way can God be God to Aristotle. Contemplation—the few moments in which the soul of man succeeds in disengaging itself from the things of sense, and steepes itself, as it were, in pure thought<sup>1</sup>—this is to him the *summum bonum*, the highest bliss of man—and this bliss, vouchsafed to us but for a brief moment now and again, constitutes the very nature of God. God is pure thought, pure mind, pure energy. “It is on such a principle that Heaven and Nature depend,” says Aristotle. “And there belongs to it a blessed life, such as we taste but for a short while. With it bliss is eternal (but for us this is impossible), since pleasure is the energy of the Divine life, and, by reason of this, wakefulness, perception, thought, are pleasantest, and through these hopes and memories.” With us, Aristotle implies, the constant wakefulness and “recollectedness” necessary for the life of contemplation are impossible, by reason of our human frailty; but God knows no such limitation. With Him, therefore, life is constant contemplation, perpetual pleasure. “Pure thought,” he proceeds, “has for its object that which is best in itself, and this the more the purer it is. For the thinking power thinks itself according to the measure with which it grasps the thinkable; for when it seizes and thinks this, mind becomes the subject of its own thought, so that mind and thought are one and the same. For that which has the faculty of grasping thought and the essence of things is mind. And in the possession of this faculty lies its actuality, its *energeia*. So that in the faculty of thought, rather than in *energeia*, seems to be that which makes mind Divine, and reflection, the sweetest and the best.”

**Ninth Condition.**—God can only think Himself. There is no single point in the Aristotelian conception of the Divine nature which so powerfully contrasts with the Christian conception as this. And yet it follows, especially from that which has been already laid down. “As regards the mind of God,” so the philosopher muses, “there are some difficulties (in the way of our comprehending it)—for mind is the most Divine of all phenomena, and yet it is not easy to see how the general conditions of mind are applicable to God.<sup>2</sup> If God thinks of nothing, where is then His majesty?—He becomes as one that sleeps. If He thinks of something (apart from Himself) and so becomes dependent on another (for the subject of thought)—this would not be thought according to His own nature, but potentiality (the mere capacity for receiving thought or *energeia* from another). And this would not be the noblest nature, for in thought lies the high dignity of God.

Further, if the nature of God be *nous* (the power of thought) or *noesis* (the activity of thought), what forms the subject of the thought of God? He must either think HIMSELF, or something else; and if something else, then either always the same, or now this, now that. “Does it then,” he asks, “make any difference in the argument whether the thought of God is the noble (*to kalon*) or the indifferent (*to tychon*=objects of chance)? Would it not rather be folly in us to suppose that diverse objects occupied His thoughts? It is clear that His thoughts are the most Divine and the noblest, and that there is no change in them, for change leads to the worse. . . .

<sup>1</sup> As Plato would say, soars upwards to its kindred in heaven. (See *ante*, p. 569.)

<sup>2</sup> “My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways,” saith the Lord.

Further, it is clear that there is something more worthy of honour even than mind, the thinking-power—viz. “that which occupies the thinking-power—thought, for thought and the activity of thought are still present even with one who thinks the worst thoughts.” The bare suggestion of this contingency—possible enough in regard to the human thinking power—is altogether impossible and abhorrent when brought into connection with the Divine nature, a supposition, as Aristotle says, “to be fled from.” His argument is that:—

- (1) God is the first and best, the good, true beauty.
- (2) As such, He cannot change.
- (3) Pure thought has for its object that which is best in itself, and this the more the purer it is.

Hence, from the logical standpoint God can only think Himself. “God thinks HIMSELF, if He is indeed the best, and so, with Him, thought is the thought of thought.”

Here we have, seem to have, indeed, in its very essence the old conception of the solitariness of God. If God is the highest and the holiest, no thought of what is less high and less holy than Himself can possibly occupy His Divine mind. He must be solely absorbed in contemplating His own Divine perfection. What a picture of God! It is simply a reproduction in the advanced philosophical thought of the age of the old Homeric conception of the Deity—a repetition of the constant refrain of the *Iliad*: “And the Father withdrew Himself and sat apart, rejoicing in His glory.” But here the conception of the fatherhood so familiar to Homer is wanting. Of that noblest conception of God—God the Father as revealed by Christ—God so loving the world that He gave His only Son to save the world—God yearning over the world—God suffering for the world—there is not the faintest trace. Only with the advent of Jesus Christ could such a thought of God enter into the mind of man.

But if Aristotle failed to anticipate that which was utterly beyond the reach of human foresight, shall we say that his “groping” after God failed altogether? Nay, rather, shall we not acknowledge that the Divine *Logos*, the Divine reason Himself is brought nearer to us by it? God eternal and apart from matter—God as the Divine *energeia*—God working as the object of love—God as pure thought—each of these conceptions is in itself a spring of the deepest truth—an inspiration proceeding directly from the *Logos spermatikos* Himself, from Him who worked in Greek experimenters as He worked in Hebrew prophets.

**Summary.**—“If, then,” concludes Aristotle, “the life of God is as blissful always as ours now and again, it is a wonderful existence—if it is more full of bliss than ours ever is, it is still more wonderful. And yet so it is. And life belongs to God, for the energy of thought is life, and thought is pure energy, hence the pure energy of thought is life, and that the noblest, life eternal.

“We say, then, that God is a living being, eternal and the best, and that life and eternity, everlasting and unbroken, belong to God. Such is the nature of God.”



## II. God and the Universe: (A) the Chain of Causes; (B) the Evidence of Design; (C) God at once the Source and the Order in, and the Ruler of, the Universe.

WE now come to the consideration of the second part of the subject—the relation of God to the visible universe. Did Aristotle say, with the Psalmist: “The heavens are the work of Thy fingers,” or did he conceive of the universe as having an existence apart from and independent of God? Did he regard this great being—whom he clearly knew as the *energeia*, the life—as Himself standing so apart in the “line of the unmoved,” as to be wholly regardless of the other line—the line of things moving, yearning, stretching towards Him as their proper goal and end?

The answer to these questions may be briefly summed up thus: Aristotle regards all nature as absolutely dependent upon God:—

- (1) For movement, *i.e.* life, for movement is the manifestation of life;
- (2) For the continuance of life;
- (3) For the conditions under which that life is carried on.

We may prove this in three ways:—

(A) **By the Chain of Causes.**—“Nothing is moved by chance.” We call to mind in this connection the doctrine laid down in the *Physics* of the absolute necessity of postulating the existence of an unmoved mover of the universe—one who moves all things through link after link culminating in Himself—as a man moves a stone by means of a link between himself and that stone, *viz.* the stick which he holds in his hand.<sup>1</sup>

In the *Metaphysics* Aristotle proceeds to develop this doctrine. We recollect his definition of the three kinds of substance:—

- (a) The highest—the non-material, the eternal, the unmoved.
- (b) The next in rank, that which is also eternal, but belonging to the domain of nature, inasmuch as it partakes of matter and of motion.
- (c) The lowest substance, the perishable.

Aristotle’s conception of the relation of the highest to the other substances is that of the energiser, the giver of motion, and consequently of life. The highest essence it is that gives the impetus to the first heaven, the “eternal” sphere of the fixed stars, and this again in its turn moves others, *i.e.* the earth and planets, the sphere of the perishable, where birth and decay come into action.

*The eternal things of the second degree.*—The sphere of the first heaven he regards as “eternal,” because he holds it to be a scientific fact that motion has always been. If God is pure *energeia*, that energy must have been always in action, always manifesting itself, otherwise it would not be “energy” but potentiality. Aristotle cannot accept the doctrine that things have arisen out of night or chaos or non-being. The only solution to the problem of the universe is this great doctrine of a primal *energeia*: “The question before us may be solved in this way,” he says. “There is something which is perpetually moved in ceaseless motion, and this motion is in a circle; and that this is so is clear, not only from reasoning but from fact. And so the first heaven is eternal. Now,” he says, “there must also be something which effects this movement . . . there is something in the middle which moves and is itself unmoved, being eternal, pure essence and *energeia*,” and then he goes on to that grand explanation with which we are already familiar, that this great something moves as the object of desire and thought.

<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, p. 648.

So much for the "eternal" things of the second rank, the sphere of the first heaven. They are moved, says Aristotle, but they also move others—the things of the third rank, in the sphere of the earth and planets.

*The perishable things of the third degree.*—"If birth and decay are to come into existence," says Aristotle, "there must be something which continually energises in some other way. And of necessity this 'other' must energise (a) in one way, according to the measure of itself, and (b) in another way, according to the measure of another."

The meaning of this somewhat obscure passage would seem to be, that the energising of the second cause (the sphere of the first heaven) is not sufficient without the added energising of some other cause. "What is this other?" asks Aristotle. "It must be either a third factor or the first. Of necessity it is the first, for this is the cause of itself and of the other. Therefore he concludes—

(a) "The first is the nobler, for it was (in the beginning) the cause of that which is always the same (= the "eternal" sphere of the fixed stars).

(b) "Second comes the cause of that which changes, while

(c) "The cause that change is perpetual is the union of both (first and second causes).

We may interpret Aristotle's chain of causes thus: the first cause is that which has energy in itself. It is the cause of the second cause and also of the third cause or causes that produce birth and decay; while the perpetuity of the cycle of birth and decay is due to the energising of the first cause, acting in union with the secondary causes, and through the successive links of the chain. Nature, indeed, as we have seen, is defined as that which has the principle of movement, or the capacity for being moved, in itself—but for the continuance of this principle of movement—in other words, for the continuance of life—it is dependent on the first great principle of energy, God Himself. It is indeed the action of the subordinate cause, the seed or germ, energising according to the law of its nature that produces the changing phenomena of nature; but Aristotle is clearly of opinion that for its lasting perpetuity the world of change or nature is dependent on its union with "another," even the great first, the unmoved, who changeth not.

"If nothing exists besides the things perceptible to the senses," he says in another place, "then nothing would be an object of thought, but the objects perceived of the senses would be all, and there would be no 'science' unless we were to call perception by the senses (which is common to the animals) 'science.' Further, if there is nothing 'eternal,' then birth coming into existence, is impossible; for there must be something which 'becomes' and out of which it proceeds, and the last (link in the chain) must be unbegotten, for we must stand still somewhere, and birth out of non-being is impossible. Moreover, when there is birth and movement, there must of necessity be a goal, for no movement whatsoever is without limit, but to all movement there is an end" (*telos*=an accomplishment) towards which the movement tends.

This goal is God—the unmoved object of desire, towards whom the whole visible universe stretches. Have we not here a forecast of the Apostle's words—the whole creation groaning and travailing in pain together until now, waiting for its glorious end, the manifestation of its destiny?

Thus far, we have seen that God fulfils in Himself two of Aristotle's causes—the external causes—(1) He is the mover, *energeia* and cause of change, the principle of movement; (2) He is the unmoved mover, the *telos*, the goal—that for which, in the ultimate sense, all exists. But what



of the two subordinate or internal causes:—Has God anything to do with that out of which a thing proceeds—Matter? or with that into which it grows or is shaped—Form? In other words, does Aristotle regard God as the Creator as well as the energiser? We may say at once that this is a point on which Aristotle does not express himself with the clearness which we desiderate. He seems to take for granted that matter—that is, matter in its elemental shapeless form—has always been in existence. Birth and decay go on ceaselessly, but it is the same “matter” which appears through the ages in an infinitude of shapes. Hence he speaks of “the conception of ‘unbegottenness’ (*agennetos*) which clings to matter.” Life may come, life may go; but the “matter” which serves its purposes in the shaping of the organism remains the same. We must leave on one side the question as to what Aristotle thought of the “creation” of this elemental matter in the beginning. He does not even stop to consider it, for something far higher has seized his attention, and that is the in-dwelling form which lays hold of the elemental matter, and shapes it into what it ultimately becomes. Aristotle would have considered the question of the creation of matter, *hyle*, a very small thing beside that higher question, the shaping and determining of the *hyle*. “If,” he says, “matter exists by reason of the conception of uncreatedness which clings to it, how much more reasonable is it to say that the essential form by which it becomes something definite exists! If neither form nor matter has a real existence (as some philosophers maintain) then nothing at all exists; and if this assumption is impossible, then there must of necessity exist, besides the concrete individual thing (the *synolon*), a something—the shape (*morphe*) and the form (*eidos*).”

In the *eidos* of Aristotle we have the idea of Plato, with this great and essential difference that, whereas Plato conceived of his idea as something existing apart, the heavenly pattern after which the earthly thing is shaped—Aristotle regards the idea as the essential part of the earthly thing, that which shapes and moulds it into what it is to be.

To this point we shall recur again. Meantime, not to break the thread of the argument, we must look now at that feature of the controversy which is essential to it. If everything in nature is shaped by an in-dwelling idea or form, has God anything to do with this form? or has everything come about by “development” and the energising of the individual forms in the world of Nature. Fortunately, on this point at least, we know the mind of Aristotle. “Development,” “Energising” Movement (or change), and, he says, “Nothing is moved (*i.e.* changeth) by chance.”

(B) **The Evidence of Design in Nature.**—The basis of the doctrine of a purpose in nature was laid, as we know, not by Aristotle, but by Socrates (p. 558) and by Plato (p. 548). To Aristotle, however, is due the credit of having first demonstrated it on scientific grounds. He not only lays it down (like the companion-doctrine of the Unmoved Mover) in the *Physics*, and develops it in like manner in the *Metaphysics*, but it may really be said to pervade the whole of his system. Examples are numerous. It is not by chance—he says in the *Physics*—neither is it due to any mere natural “necessity,” that the fertilising rain falls at the time of seed-sowing; or, again, that the various parts of a natural whole are fitted for the special work which each part has to perform in that whole. For instance, it is not “by chance” that the front teeth are sharp and adapted for purposes of dividing food, whilst the back teeth are broad and adapted for grinding, masticating that food.

“That the great part of the evidence of adaptation in nature is no mere

work of 'chance,' " says Dr. Rolfes, " but is only to be explained by the causative influence of the object or purpose," Aristotle demonstrates in the following way:—

(a) *By the regularity of its occurrence.*—What "Chance" effects, happens only now and again, but the adaptation of things to an end—what we call the beautiful order of things—is the standing rule in nature. If this be so, there is no other explanation than that the object is the cause. Things are as they are, and work as they work, because both—their being and their work—are controlled by the object.

(b) *From the harmony that exists between action and object.*—A second proof, which, however, is rather to be regarded as a development of the first, he lays down as follows: Where the object works as a determining factor (*i.e.* ruling, planning, designing) as in the case of well-considered human activity, everything that bears upon the object or purpose in view, from the first step to the last, is done on account of that object; and there appears between object and action (leading up to it) perfect harmony. Therefore we are entitled to draw the conclusion that wherever this harmony appears—that is, wherever, as a matter of fact, everything is so arranged or takes place so that it serves a corresponding purpose or object—then it is the object that rules. As a matter of fact we find the adaptation of things to corresponding objects everywhere in nature. Therefore we may conclude that nature works for the sake of an object.

(c) *From the intelligence manifested by animals.*—A third proof presents itself to our philosopher in the work performed by many animals—*e.g.* by spiders and ants. In his *History of Animals*, again, Aristotle brings forward many examples of the kind, *e.g.* the prudence of stags and the art shown by swallows in constructing their nests; the time chosen for the yearly sleep, the migration of birds, and so on.

All in Aristotle's eyes is directed by a higher power towards a certain *telos* or object, and that object is—the good.

(C) **The Good at once the Source of Order and the Commander of the Universe.**—In the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle, as we have said, develops this doctrine. After his inquiry into the nature of God, he proceeds thus: "We must now examine in which way the nature of the universe (the great 'whole') includes the good and the best—whether this is something apart, and existing by and for itself—or whether it is the imminent order in the universe—or both, as in an army. For," he says, "the good is, in one sense, in the order of the army, and, in another sense, in the commander; and much more," he adds, "in the latter, for the commander is not dependent on the order, but the order on him. All things," he concludes, "are ordered thus." God is therefore in every shaping, moulding, developing form; in one sense, Himself the Order of the Universe; whilst in another sense He stands apart, in a line by Himself, the Commander and Orderer of all things.

What would Aristotle have thought of those theories of our own day which account for the present beautiful order of things by supposing that each individual germ (or idea) has developed and struggled upwards without any commander or orderer, directed solely by the struggle for existence? Surely, if Aristotle were among us now, he would point out and strongly maintain that the individual struggle for existence has been subordinated throughout to the purposes of the Great Commander—even the good of the whole, the march of humanity towards Himself. For, in the passage from which we have just quoted the exact meaning of the concluding sentence is: not merely "All things are ordered in this way," but "All things are ordered together



(*syntetaktai*), arranged, organised, drawn up in line of battle, in this way." "All things are ordered together in this way, but," he adds, "all things are not ordered alike—fishes, birds, and plants—and they are not ordered so that one has nothing to do with the other. The reverse is the case, for all has been organised (*syntetaktai* = repeated) in relation to one consideration (= the good)." And then he proceeds with a very beautiful example of the principle of *noblesse oblige*. "Just," he says, "as in a household, it is the free members who are least of all allowed to act as chance may move them, but are directed how to proceed in all or most things, while slaves and domestic animals do little towards the common weal, but, for the most part, only what comes to hand: so in this way, the nature of each thing works as its principle of action"—a passage on which Bender's comment is: "In the order of the universe, the highest parts, the heavenly bodies, have, in accordance with their rank and importance, the strictest rules and laws. With those parts of the universe which are of minor importance, chance and self-will have freer play." But, whether of greater or minor importance, everything great or small, is organised, ordered together, moving towards that great central point—the good of the whole.

Such is Aristotle's notion of the constitution of the universe. The words with which this great twelfth book of the *Metaphysics* concludes are very striking: "True Being (God) does not will a bad constitution"—and by a bad constitution he is referring to the reign of many principles striving to obtain their ends after their own sweet will, and he quotes with approval the words of Homer:—

"The rule of many is not good. Let there be one ruler!"—even God, the good—the best and noblest!

## CONCLUSION

*By the Editor.*

The religion of the ancient Greeks was not a "positive" but a traditional religion. It was not the creation of a great religious innovator "deliberately departing from the traditions of the past;" it was itself the accumulation of beliefs and usages "which cannot be traced to the influence of individual minds, but formed part of the inheritance from the past." With the usages—ritual, sacrifice, and votive offerings—the author of *The Makers of Hellas* has not been concerned. With creed or dogma the author could not be concerned, for creed and dogma were alike unknown to the ancient Greeks. What has been done is that the beliefs or the speculations of various individual thinkers have been set before the reader. But it is important to recognise clearly and fully that such individual speculations or beliefs were no part of the religion or the religious duties of which the performance was required, and, if necessary, enforced by the State. Many of those speculations, as we clearly see now, could ultimately find no satisfactory logical basis save in monotheism. In some cases that conclusion must have been fairly apparent to the authors of those speculations and the holders of those beliefs. But in all cases a spirit of "accommodation" prompted the use of language which saved the speculations of the author from coming into avowed collision with the polytheism of the community. Creed and dogma were, indeed, unknown. But however amorphous, in their default, may have been the belief of Hellas, on one point at least it was clear, viz. that there were gods many. By that article of belief polytheism had to stand or fall.

It was that article of belief which made a religious reform of polytheism an

impossibility, an *Unding*, a contradiction in terms. A monotheistic religion may suffer corruption and degradation; and reform is possible because, when the abuses are overthrown, the original article of belief in the one and only God is left standing, and is more plain and more potent than before. Reform, in religion as in politics, aims at the destruction of abuses. Reform is in one sense the truest conservatism, for if it seeks to tear down the ivy, its object is to save the tree which the ivy would strangle. But reform is also progress and development: if it reverts to the original principles of the body politic or of the religious community, it also restates them with a deeper comprehension and a fuller expression of their import than was possible before. The deeper comprehension of the religious principle amongst Greek thinkers led, as has been shown by the author of *The Makers of Hellas*, to a fuller expression of the fact, whether wholly or partially apprehended, that "amid all varieties of religious *opinion*, the goal of religious *aspiration* is One."<sup>1</sup> Religious reform led not to the reinstatement but to the destruction of the polytheism of ancient Greece. Of the two phases of reform—destruction followed by reconstruction—the former alone was accomplished by the makers of Hellas. The opinion of the few did not become the conscious aspiration of the many until Christianity invades Greece.

Whatever may have been the original religious belief of the Hebrews, whether they were or were not monotheist from the beginning, it is historic fact that the polytheism of ancient Greece is not the seed whence the monotheism of Christianity sprang. Polytheism in this instance did not develop or evolve into monotheism. Its walls crumbled from their own weight and because of their own unsubstantial foundations, and an invading monotheism entered into possession. So far this instance lends no weight to the idea that all men from the beginning were polytheist or polydæmonist or animistic, and that polytheism in the orderly course of evolution naturally bears the flower and the seed of monotheism. In this instance the destruction of polytheism was the condition precedent to the reception of monotheism from without. We may probably venture to go further, and to assert that it is a plain contradiction in terms to maintain that a polytheistic community as such ever becomes a monotheistic community. The polytheistic community as such, as a body of individuals worshipping a plurality of gods, must cease to exist absolutely; its purport and object, its rites and beliefs must be given up by its members, before they can become monotheist; and when its members have given up their polytheism, they are no longer the same men—they have been reborn—and their community is a new thing. In fine, a polytheist community does not and cannot evolve into a monotheistic community: the polytheism and the community, which exists simply for the enforcement of polytheism, must both perish before monotheism and a monotheist community can take their place.

The reformation of a monotheistic people is always aided by the fact that the reformer can appeal to the tradition of the community, to its traditional belief, however obscured and perverted, in the one God. But in the case of a polytheistic community there is no such tradition to appeal to. The appeal is to the aspiration of the individual after the one God; and the method of the appeal consists in bringing to the light and to self-consciousness the fact that such is the aspiration of the individual soul. The individual soul is called in effect to bear witness against the tradition of the polytheist community. It is precisely this fact that was either not realised or else was not faced by those individual thinkers in Greece who were consciously or vaguely monotheist in their aspiration. Religious reform was and is possible only if it converts or

<sup>1</sup> *The Hibbert Journal*, vol. i. No. 1, p. 3.



transforms the community. A reform which aims at substituting monotheism for polytheism cannot be said even to have begun so long as a *modus vivendi* between the two is sought or tolerated. So far as the dramatists of ancient Greece are concerned, we can hardly say that a *modus vivendi* was sought: those of their religious aspirations which logically postulated a belief in monotheism were probably too vaguely apprehended to require any "accommodation" to enable them to dwell in the minds in which polytheism had a traditional footing. With the philosophers of ancient Greece the case was different; belief in polytheism had ceased altogether, and "accommodation" was required not to find room in their hearts for a new belief by the side of the old, but to find language which would to some extent express their belief, and would not bring them into unnecessary collision with the State religion. Yet collision with the traditional polytheism was essential, if the latter was to be overthrown; and if collision was studiously avoided, the inference is inevitable that religious reform, conversion of the community, was for some reason not aimed at. It was not aimed at, because the philosopher despaired of converting the community; "and therefore seeing that he would be of no use to the State or to his friends, and reflecting that he would have to throw away his life without doing any good either to himself or others, he holds his peace and goes his own way" (*Rep.* 496). It is the philosopher, not the martyr, who reflects; and it is the martyr, not the philosopher, whose blood is the seed of the Church. The philosopher "is like one who, in the storm of dust and sleet which the driving wind hurries along, retires under the shelter of a wall; and seeing the rest of mankind full of wickedness, he is content, if only he can live his own life and be pure from evil and unrighteousness, and depart in peace and goodwill, with bright hopes" (*ibid.*). The philosopher who, seeing the rest of mankind full of wickedness, is content to leave them to their fate, is not likely to benefit the community to which he belongs. Nor was any Greek community converted from polytheism to monotheism by Greek philosophy. The Greeks who were converted abandoned the polytheistic community in which they were born and to which they belonged, and joined the Christian community.

The attitude of Plato is one of scarcely veiled hostility to the community: his philosopher stands apart from the community; that is, "the rest of mankind, full of wickedness." If his philosopher became a king with despotic power, or if a despot adopted his philosophy, then his philosophic dream might become a reality and his views would be imposed upon the State. But in default of a philosophic despot, there is no escape from wickedness for mankind. The possibility that men, whether slave or free, might welcome and freely adopt a new communion, a fresh form of community, did not impose itself upon Plato. The philosophy which he offered was not one for the slave, the bondsman, or the ordinary citizen. They might be ruled by a despot possessed of its principles: they could not themselves partake in his philosophy. They might be made, by one possessed of the necessary tyrannical power, to act in conformity with principles enforced by him, but those principles would be external to them and imposed upon them from without. The binding force of those philosophic principles in the case of the ordinary, non-philosophic man would be external compulsion, not internal conviction. From this point of view, therefore, the conversion of the ordinary man is a thing impossible. On philosophic principles, polytheism may stand condemned, but the ordinary man is incapable of philosophy. If, therefore, the ordinary man is to abandon polytheism, he must be compelled so to do by the external force of a benevolent despot who accepts and enforces the Platonic philosophy.

If these were the only conditions on which polytheism could be abandoned,

the Greeks would at the present day be polytheists awaiting the coming of a philosopher with the necessary power or of a despot inspired by the Platonic philosophy. If polytheism is now abandoned, it is because the soul of the individual, slave or free, was and is the court in which polytheism can be tried and cast. Plato in effect denied the possibility of trying the case in any such court: the slave simply was incompetent to any such proceeding. At the present day, as was intimated in the Introduction to this book, there is a tendency to maintain that the power of such a court does not extend beyond itself, that religion is and must be a purely individual matter: the external, physical, material world, we do all share in, and its laws we may all be aware of, and we all are subject to. But religion is a consciousness which individuals have—a movement of the individual soul. That is an undoubted fact. The point at which a difference of opinion may arise here occurs. We may decline to proceed beyond this point, as Mr. William James and M. Sabatier, in the passages already quoted (p. xxiii), appear to do. Or we may go further. The situation is exactly parallel to that which arises in metaphysics when the question is put, whether the individual is justified in travelling beyond his own sensations. In metaphysics the individualist declines to go further: he has sensations and he knows that he has; but he has no such knowledge of the existence of other people, and he sees nothing to compel or to warrant him in believing that there is any external world which he apprehends by means of his sensations. There is according to him no external world of which he is a member and in which he moves and lives and has his being. The same line of argument which thus proves, or seeks to prove, that there is no external world, results in denying that there is any spiritual world. If we start with the proposition that religion is a consciousness which the individual has, and if we refuse to proceed beyond that proposition, we deny the reality and the possibility of any spiritual world in exactly the same way as the individualist philosopher denies the reality of the external world and of any other minds than his own. In metaphysics this position has never been able to maintain itself for any length of time. The same line of argument which rejects the existence of the object, the physical world, and asserts that the individual's knowledge is limited to his own sensations, ultimately leads, if logically followed, to a denial of the existence of the subject: the dissecting knife which severs sensation from its object cuts sensation equally free from a subject. If sensation requires no object, it implies no subject. When the world and man are alike reduced to sensations which are sensations of nothing and belong to nobody, philosophic scepticism usually supervenes. We may safely argue in this case from the analogy of metaphysics to religion, and conclude that if religion is nothing but the movement or the consciousness of the individual soul, the spiritual world will follow the fate of the physical world: both alike will be deprived—by the same fallacious argument—of objective reality; and the soul, in the religious sense of the word, will be denied to exist, on the same grounds as in metaphysics the subject is got rid of.

The plain fact is that the physical world is not my exclusive world, and that I am not cut off from communion with other individuals. Neither is the spiritual world, into which a man may enter, his own creation, nor is it more the work of his own fancy than the physical world. A man may draw wrong inferences as to the external world from his sensations, and may expect or believe, in consequence, what does not come to pass; but further experience teaches, or may teach him, where and why his inference was wrong. A man may also draw wrong inferences from his experience as to the spiritual world;



and he may learn from his own further experience where and why those inferences were wrong. But it is much more often the case, in regard to both, that he learns from the experience of others. In both, the child is largely taught what to expect by his elders: he may be taught to avoid fire without going through the personal experience of being burnt. In both, his elders themselves may profit by the wider or the deeper experience and knowledge of others. In both, the greatest revelations have been granted to, and the greatest revolutions have been effected by, some master-mind who has opened out some region hitherto unknown and unexplored. In either case, if the discovery or the revelation becomes accepted, it is because others, following the discoverer, find for themselves and by their own experience that what he said is true. But in such cases our own experience is not the sole basis for the truth of that which we find to be true, though it may be the firm foundation of our personal conviction. The simple fact that we were led by the experience of others from mistaken views to a truer apprehension is itself sufficient evidence for him who has gone through the process that his individual experience is not the final court of appeal, and that he may yet learn more, as he has learnt something, by submitting further to the guidance already vouchsafed to him. This attitude of mind is faith. This guidance is precisely what was wanting in Greece, as the reader of *The Makers of Hellas* will have seen. The higher religious aspirations of the Greeks were essentially individual; they constitute a typical example of individual religion and of its comparative and necessary infertility.

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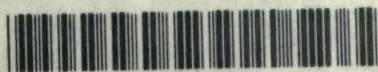
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